

# **ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAQAMAT IN THE ABBASID PERIOD**

**Under the Supervision  
of  
Professor Mukhtar-ud-Din Ahmad  
Head of the  
Department of Arabic  
A.M.U. Aligarh.**

**S. M. Z. Islam  
Research Scholar  
Arabic  
M. U. ALIGARH**



**T1268**

T1268

## A B S T R A C T

The topic of the present thesis is the "Origin and Development of Maqamat in the Abbasid Period." It contains 5 chapters which deal with various matters relating to social, political, economic and academic life of the people, which was spread throughout the Islamic Empire in the lifetime of the writers of the Maqamat. The first chapter begins with an introduction of the Arabic prose and poetry and other literary movements during the time of many Caliphs and rulers of the Arabian Empire. It further deals with several qualities of the literary pioneers, their writings and the stage of affairs when different kinds of literary works were exhibited before the learned men and the audience. It clearly mentions about the early development of Arabic literature during the Abbasid reign and the growth from the early decades of Islam. In this chapter a brief but complete picture of the Arabic literature and the literary movements during the Abbasids, which is known as every scholar of the Arabic literature is filled. A number of literary forms of the Arabic prose and poetry and their writings are described. Their various characteristics, mode of composition, association of fine objects and purpose of their contribution to certain branch of literature are dealt at length which is indeed a source of inspiration and mine of knowledge and learning for the scholars of the Arab-world.

In the second chapter the origin and early development of Maqamat is related in detail. The influence of

Greek and Persian literatures on the subject, if any, also finds mention. To begin with, the word 'Majma' is found in the Arabic literature since the ancient time. In the first stage 'Majma' and 'Majma' were used in the sense of residential place or assembly of the tribe as stated by Brockelmann in Encyclopedia of Islam and many other writers. In the second stage the aforesaid word was used in the sense of 'meetings' called by preachers in which the audience had opportunity of participating. The well-known thirteenth century poet, Al-Jahiz has called the people who attended such assemblies with the name of Majma. In another famous Bedouin poet, Muḥammad Majma means the Assembly (Majlis) itself, instead of the people who attended it. In an article Joseph Soudy has translated the word 'Majma' as 'situation' which seems more appropriate than the other equivalent words which are noted by other authors. Shortly, in the earliest stage 'Majma' stood for the 'Assembly of the tribe' synonymous with 'Majlis'. It was then applied to the 'gatherings' at which the Umayyad and early Abbasid Caliphs received their men in order to hear edifying discourses from them, e.g. as Ḥishām did with Khalid b. Saʿdān related by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal or as stated in 'Siraj-al-Nur' of Al-Murushī or as stated in 'Iḥṣān al-ʿArā'id of Ibn Abī Ḥabib.

The word 'Majma' however, in the more general meaning of 'Gathering' e.g. Jahiz (ʿIḥṣān al-ʿArā'id), where it appears along with poetry, proverbs and tales of battles as an essential element in Arab education. In the third century A.H. however, the word 'Majma' began to sink



### III

from this higher sphere, it became the name for a beggar's appeal, which had to be framed in carefully chosen language, the more the literary training of the 'adib, once a privilege of court circles, became disseminated among the people, an example of these appeals is preserved by Jahis in Bayhaqi's 'Kitab-al-Mahasin-al-Masani.' It also refers to a particular class which was most popular during the 3rd and 4th century of Islam and was named as 'Mukdin'. It is also said that these persons were known as 'Ahl-al-Kudis' or 'Danu-Sasan' etc.

"Later, the appeals of beggars seems to have paved the way for the literary genre proper (of A. Mez, Abu-al-Qasim, page 23/24). This owes its existence to Hamadhani. He created a typical representation of this literary Bohemianism to which he himself belonged, which entered upon the inheritance of the Raza poets of the early days of Islam, like Al-Hucayn."

The origin of the Maqamat remained a mystery till long, as no writer could seriously deal with this point. Thus, the credit of the first masterpiece production of the Maqamat, which gained popularity among the literary genre, goes to the illustrious writer entitled with the sobriquet 'The wonder of time'. From a perusal of various facts described in the history of Arabic literature, one can easily conclude that tales and stories were generally found amongst the Arabs since the ancient time. This practice continued till the age of Al-Hamadhani, when he produced his majestic composition of the Maqamat. But the Maqamat are not simple stories and there are, indeed, certain other characteristics which are dramatic in character and they also suggest that

the Maqamat are based upon the elements of dramatic pattern. Their plot, characters, suspense, climax and original mode of composition such as of the European drama, lead one to draw this inference. This is why Nicholson has clearly observed that there is 'some approach to the dramatic style.'

Besides, anecdotes and tales of the past that are common with the Maqamat, the next point to be considered is of 'Saj', which has nicely adorned them. Though there is a vast difference between the ancient tales and the adventures of the Maqamat, yet speaking literally both of them belong to the same class of stories. But so far as the rhymed prose in Arabic literature is concerned, it is seldom found in the days of Jahiliyya till the last decades of the Umayyads except those which are available in sermons and oracles of divines. In pre-Islamic age they satisfied themselves with the epic poetry and lyrical ballads. There was thus no question of artistic prose at that time. Even in the reign of the Umayyads they did not display any significant composition in 'Saj' such as the Maqamat. It is the credit of the Abbasid era that the rhymed prose opened a new chapter in the history of Arabic Prose Literature and the glorious Assemblies attained supreme position amongst the scholars of the age.

From the 3rd to 4th century A.H. the Arabic Prose Literature acquired predominance at the hands of the leading writers of these periods. The towering personality of Al-Jahiz (d. 255 A.H.) illuminated various problems of the 3rd century A.H. He depicted on all aspects of contemporary life in a series of epistles, composed in a chaste and witty style.

The other reputed authors were Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 A.H.) Al-Mubarrad (d. 285 A.H.); Tha'lib (d. 291 A.H.); Ibn Duraid (d. 321 A.H.); Ibn Faris (d. 395 A.H.); Ibn-al-Jarid (d. 395 A.H.); Al-Sahab b. 'Abbad and others, who made their valuable contribution to the Arabic Prose Literature.

It was, no doubt, Ibn Qutayba, who incorporated in his writings the elements <sup>of the Persian</sup> historical and courtly traditions that had established themselves at the court. The advancement of Hellenistic contributions in the 3rd century A.H. was made by several translations of Greek works e.g. the works of Qasr b. Luca (d. 220 A.H.); Hunain b. Ishaq (d. 260 A.H.) etc.

Shortly, the grandeur of composition mainly depended on adornment and decoration of the text. Many other beauties such as 'Jana' and 'Badi' were created for this purpose. The rulers as well as the people of Abbasid age were fond of this type of artistic literature. A large number of Secretaries (Kuttab) adopted 'Saj' in their writings and as a result of it, decoration of words in Arabic prose and poetry had abundantly increased. In truth, many of these writers had ignored the meaning of the words and had begun to play on words.

So far as the question of the originator of the 'Maqamat' is concerned, it is unanimously observed by all writers that Badi' al-Zaman was the creator of this art of composition, except one opinion of Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ali al-Husri-al-Qairani (d. 453 A.H.) who as it seems more likely

was misrepresented by the copyists of 'Zahr-al-Afak' because of their borrowing the text from some incredible sources. This is the main cause of difference found in the text at some places. According to Al-Husri and credits of making wonderful stories goes to Ibn Duraid (d. 321 A.H.). Some others have held that Badī' al-Zaman learned this style and subject-matter from his predecessors such as Al-Jahiz and Ibn Hariz. However, this fact is certain and unchallengeable that there is no composition similar to 'Maqamat' existed in Arabic prose literature before the appearance of the Maqamat Al-Hamadhani. Hence he is the originator of this unique form of composition. Besides, not a single contemporary of Badī' al-Zaman e.g. Al-Khwarizmi (d. 333 A.H.), has ever accused him of imitating the accounts of Ibn Duraid or any other episode by any other writer.

Hariri in his 47th Assembly of 'Maqat', has alluded to the priority of Badī' al-Zaman and has also asserted his own superiority to him, through the help of his Assemblies in the following words :-

"If the Alexanderian preceded me,  
know that the few precedes the many, yet the shrewd's  
excellence belongs not to the few."

The third chapter deals with the major writers of the 'Maqamat' and main characteristics of their works. Arabs, as it is said, have no 'Maqamat' before the appearance of Maqamat Badī' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani (357-398 A.H.). He is, therefore, originator of this form of classical writing. As regards the major writers of the 'Maqamat', there are only two outstanding personalities, who are well esteemed in

## VII

the literary circle of the Arab-world. They are Badi' al-Zaman Al-Hamadhani (358-398 A.H.) and Abu Muhammad Al-Qasim b. Ali Al-Hariri (446-516 A.H.) Al-Hamadhani was the first writer, who shows this unique style of composition and Al-Hariri followed him a century hence and attained the highest admiration and popularity from the scholars of the Arabic Literature. In fact there were a number of followers of Al-Hariri who imitated his Maqamat, but no one could achieve the fame which he had at his command.

The requisites of the Maqamat which are common to both Al-Hamadhani and Al-Hariri and which are also found in some of the Maqamat of the latter writers, are the following:

1. An Assembly (Maqama where everything takes place).
2. A Narrator (Rawa')
3. A hero (Bagl or Mukhl)
4. Plot, which circles round the whole story, related in a Maqama.
5. Story itself :- No connection with other stories except that the compiler, the narrator and the hero are the same persons.
6. Subjects:- Its subjects are various e.g. literary, Juristic etc.
7. Name of Maqama:- Generally it refers to some place, place or point, etc.
8. Personality in Maqamat:- It relates to the personality of the compiler himself, his merits and vast learning.
9. Art in Maqamat:- Decoration of words and sentences i.e. Badi', Jinas, Ishaq, etc.

## VIII

10. Verses:- Composed by the compiler poet himself or borrowed from the poetry of some other poets.

### Badi' al-Taman al-Hamadani

358 ----- 398 A.H.

969 -----1007 A.D.

Al-Hamadani has stated that he had composed four hundred Maqamat, but it seems strange and full of exaggeration, because the number of his Maqamat received by us is 50, 51 or 52 only (vide VOL. III Suppl., 151). Perhaps this is all what he wrote.

The following are the characteristics of his Maqamat:-

1. A Narrator, 'Isa b. Hisham and a hero named Abul Fath al-Aksandari. Both of them are witnessed in each assembly.
2. A new style of writing together with the force of its subject matter.
3. His Maqamat consists of various sorts of discussions e.g. literary, Juristic, humorous or amusing etc.
4. A fine description of each matter described in Maqamat along with a realising quality and pleasure found in it.
5. Recreation and entertainment which is available in them.
6. Little artificiality and full of splendour. Undoubtedly decoration of words create wonder and amazement. His themes are sometimes too natural.
7. He has related various themes in his Maqamat. The object is to show his ornamental style of composition as well as to display his command on the Arabic prose Literature.

### Abu Muhammad al-Qasim b. Ali al-Hariri

1116 ----- 516 A.H.  
1054 ----- 1122 A.D.

Al-Hariri began to compile his Maqamat in 495 A.H. and completed it in 504 A.H. In the preface to his work he says that the composition of Maqamat was suggested to him by one whose suggestion is a command and whom it is a pleasure to obey. "I composed ..... fifty Maqamat", adds Nicholson. Hariri has himself admitted that he had followed the course of Al-Hamadhani but had surpassed him in variety, vigour and other qualities. Nicholson has remarked that Al-Hariri was 'less original than Badi' al-Zaman, but far beyond him in variety of learning and copiousness of language." Indeed he "produced in his Maqamat a masterpiece which for eight centuries, has been esteemed as next to the Koran, the chief treasure of the Arabic tongue."

The following are the characteristics of Maqamat Al-Hariri:-

A. He refers his Maqamat to a narrator al-Harith b. Hammam al-Basri by which he means himself. His hero of the Maqamat is the Abu Zayd al-Saraji, who in the opinion of all Rūwāt, is a living face, while the former is a fictitious personality.

B. Internal qualities of his Maqamat:-

- (i) His Maqamat are less inventive than the Maqamat of Al-Hamadhani.
- (ii) Hariri compares his Maqamat with those of al-Hamadhani in respect of their number, themes and characters.
- (iii) In spirit, brevity and the main points, Maqamat al-Hamadhani are ahead of Al-Hariri.
- (iv) Hariri's Maqamat are a short circle of knowledge and learning etc.

C. Outward appearance of his Maqamat:-

## X

- (i) His Maqamat are more lengthy than that of Badi' al-Zaman.
- (ii) He has used many <sup>nice</sup> unfamiliar words with fineness and decoration.
- (iii) Ornamentation of his Maqamat through saji', zabaq, Metonymy etc.
- (iv) Various sorts of Badi' e.g. riddles, pointed and un-pointed words, etc.
- (v) A large number of his own verses which prove his ability as a poet.
- (vi) Several other nice args in his Maqamat.

### D. Purpose of his Maqamat

"Hariri never forgets that the primary purpose of the Maqamat was to amuse and entertain ....", says Gibb. Al-Sherishi observes that outwardly his Maqamat are based on falsehood, but the aim of Hariri was to give a training to the students, to teach them morality and to sharpen their wits in order to learn the experiences of the world from the accounts of Seruji .... etc.

### E. Style of Hariri

His style is "a continuous display of rhetorical artifices and is full from beginning to the end, of alliteration, assonance, rhyme, parronomasia, and that Europeans are apt to consider merely verbal conceits," states Thomas Cheney.

### F. Dramatic elements in Maqamat

No doubt the requisites of a drama are found in Maqamat e.g. plot, characters, development of theme, complication, crisis and conclusion. The model is certainly of a literary fashion, the features of a drama which create horror wonder, silence, suspense, threatening, advising etc. are all existing in them. So Nicholson "his Maqamat may be



called a Romance or literary Bohemianism. In the Maqama we find some approach to the dramatic style. ...."

#### G. Peculiarities of the Maqamat

In the words of Thomas Cheney ..... "in the Abbasid times the highest literary forms of the language are united, Abu Zayd's harangues and sermons are those of the pagan orator or the muslim preacher....." His Maqamat are thus full of wonder, pleasure and excitement.

#### H. Theme of his Maqamat

Hariri like his predecessor Al-Hamadhani employed various themes, e.g. literary, juristic, humorous. All these subjects are related to a particular pattern and they stand on their own footing. They have no connection with each other except that the compiler, the narrator and the hero are the same person in each Maqama. But the theme of his Maqamat is nothing except begging and mendicancy and in this particular substance he is more accomplished than his predecessor Al-Hamadhani.

A Catalogue of all known writers of the Maqamat in the Abbasid reign and their works are laid down in the last chapter. It is one of the most important chapters of it, in which a list of 62 Maqama writers and their works are given. It is doubtless to say that Hariri was not the first writer who imitated Badi' al-Zaman in the art of Maqamat. There were a large number of imitators before Hariri as well as after his death. But the renown and celebrity of his glorious Maqamat are unknown in the history of the Arabic literature. The other Maqama writers have merely followed him, but none of them could match with his splendid and artistic Maqamat. This

## XII

names among the Maqamat writers are included, but they are far behind him what to say of standing beside him.

The last chapter deals with the Maqamat which reflect social life of the people during the Abbasid period. As literature of every age is influenced by the social condition of the people, Maqamat is no exception to this rule. There are numerous examples in the contents of the Maqamat Al-Ramadhani and Nizami which clearly depict the social life of that era. Of course, the Maqamat of Bad'i' al-Zaman and Nizami describe the condition of the people of their age. The other writers of the Maqamat have only satisfied themselves with their contribution to the new pattern of composition. Hence, the general condition of people which are found in Maqamat of Al-Ramadhani and Nizami are related in this chapter. The affairs of the people in their reigns are almost similar to those found in other places of the Islamic empire, viz. Iraq, Baghdad, Hama, Damascus and other places. These circumstances prove that there were two classes of people in that era. One of them was of the wealthy persons while the other class belonged to those who were needy and beggars. As a sequel to it, the following circumstances arose in this period.

1. A gang of robbers called with the name of "Sajalook", "Shastar", "Ayyaroon", "Ahl-i-Kudla", "Banu Qasbi", etc. These are the different classes of such robbers, who used different means to earn their living.
2. Religious and pious persons, who had no worldly care and anxiety beside them, but such persons were only a few.

Thus the literature of the Abbasid age was also affected with the above affairs of the people. The majority of the people were needy and poor. Iraq, Baghdad and other

places were shelters for the poets and literateurs. But the rulers and Governors had absolutely ignored their subjects and they were facing hardships and worries, while the courts of the Caliphs and Amirs were full of glory and magnificence. Consequently all arts had shifted to palaces, where the poets and literary men achieved fame and wealth, but those who led a life of solitude, were unable to live easily. The literary output of this reign vividly produces the social condition of the people. In short the political and social deterioration, recreation and enjoyment, hard labour and looseness of character as well as Adib's interest in it, are depicted in their works. Ibn al-'Amid, Ibn 'Abbas, Al-Thurayyisi, Al-Hamadani and others have presented various objects of their age.

One of the most striking subjects of this age was begging and mendicancy, which relates to the condition of the people, who had chosen it, as their vocation. They are called by different titles and names and Al-Hamadani and Bariri have depicted their life with their mendicancy in their Maqamat. Indeed, the basic literary fiction of begging is produced through the Maqamat. In a few words, lack of money, immorality, deception and mockery, tyranny of rulers and the then Governors, injustice of the Qazis, assemblies of wine and songs, 'chilman' and maidens, indulgence in luxury and other corruptions and vices, were the common features of the Abbasid empire. As literature of a particular age is the product of a certain circle in which a writer lives and observes his surroundings, his works thus relate to the affairs of that time and place.

#### XIV

An eminent writer has rightly remarked that "Al-Hariri's Maqamat, like those of Al-Hamadhani, are firmly rooted in the common life of the Islamic city, and portray its manners and its humours so realistically as to constitute one of the most precious documents of the Islamic middle ages."

Finally, Al-Hamadhani in his Assemblies has depicted the manners, habits, academic interests, vocation, richness and poverty, sermons, literary criticisms, culture and civilisation, morality and immorality, mendicancy and begging along with his personal expression. Similarly, Al-Hariri, has exhibited their social, political, literary and academic activities in his glorious Maqamat. Thomas Chenery has aptly observed that "the assemblies of Hariri are, themselves, the best picture of the society of the city. Wherever he may place the scene of the adventure, it is always Basra whose case he shares or reproves ....." "His works are in some respects" he adds, "the more valuable for this, since he represents in its most exquisite and refined form the culture of his age."

In these circumstances, it is a fact to hold that the Maqamat of Al-Hamadhani and Hariri are the social documents of their age. The other writers of the Assemblies have merely imitated their learned predecessors and in this their pride is rooted.

---

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAQAMAT IN THE  
ABBASID PERIOD

S. M. ZIAUL ISLAM

T1268

Under the Supervision  
of

Professor Mukhtar-ud-Din Ahmad

Head of the  
Department of Arabic  
A.M.U. Aligarh

ABBSTRACT

Of the thesis submitted to the Aligarh Muslim  
University, Aligarh, for the Degree of Doctor  
of  
Philosophy in  
Arabic.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF MAGHAT  
IN THE  
ABBASID PERIOD

T H E S I S

S U P P L I C A T E D  
B Y

S. H. ZIAUL ISLAM  
FOR

PH. D. DEGREE IN ARABIC

### Acknowledgement

It is a matter of great pleasure to me to state in the beginning of my Thesis that the present work which I have been able to place before the readers is the result of inspiration from and valuable guidance of my learned Professor Mukhtar-ud-Din Ahmad, Chairman department of Arabic, Muslim University Aligarh. Without his assistance which I received in so abundant a measure and at all stages of the work, it would have been the light of <sup>not</sup> day. A personality no less distinguished than that of Professor Ahmad could have led me to write the present thesis on a topic so difficult so obscure and in fact so far hidden in the ancient Arabic Literature. Many writers till recently had dealt only with the superiority of al-Hariri and al-Hamadhani but the facts as to how the Maqamat originated, who was its originator as well as how many Maqamat writers had written and on what pattern during the Abbasid reign and how far the Maqamat had reflected the social life of the people of their age, were the themes undealt so far in the manner desired.

I also feel it a pleasant duty to acknowledge the debt I owe to Dr. R. R. Sherwani, Reader Department of Arabic, who took the pains to go through my manuscript. He gave me useful suggestions without which the endeavour would not have been successful.

In the end, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Abdul Aleem, Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh for his valuable help and unfailing encouragements.

-----

## Contents

Chapter I	An introductory survey of the development of literature in the early Abbasid period and assessment of the place of literature in the Arabic Society of the day. P - 1 to 28
Chapter II	Origin and early development of the Maqamat. How far the Maqamat were influenced in their form and content by Greek and Persian literature. P - 29 to 86
Chapter III	Major writers of the Maqamat and main characteristics of their work. P - 87 to 150
Chapter IV	A catalogue of all known writers of Maqamat during the Abbasid period and their works. P - 151 to 168
Chapter V	Maqamat reflect the social life of the people as depicted in them. P - 169 to 299
Bibliography	I to IV

---



## Chapter I

"A survey of the Development of Literature in the early Abbasid period and an assessment of the Place of Literature in the Arab Society of the Day."

The new dynasty which captured the leadership of the Muslim world in 750 A.D. were the Abbasids who extended their rule from east to west. It consisted of all sections of the people. In fact, their caste and creed were different and there was no similarity in their language and dress. The Arabs had to face a new society because of intermingling of various groups of people who had adhered to Islam and whose culture and civilization were quite unfamiliar to the Arabians. As these groups of people were in majority, the Arabians, had to deal with them in various ways and in turn were influenced by their characteristics. Thus the non-Arabs (Afrasiyas) who knew only a little of Arabic language, began to commit faults in speaking it and gradually such faults reached the Bedouin Arabs when they came into contact with them. Only the Arabs who had not mixed with the Afrasiyas, could save their language from impurity and corruption but such instances were rare. It is most likely that if the Holy Quran was not arranged when the Arabic language would have no sign on the face of earth today. But so far as the written literature in

---

Arabic is concerned, it was always guarded against the foreign influence and its fusion. It was only the spoken language of the Arabs which was ready to receive and borrow from other languages. Hence it changed its character readily whenever a new section of people came under its domain and affected it. The result was that the common vocabulary adopted various shades and colours. Their use of words, orations and mode of speech were entirely strange to each other because of different colloquial languages which were prevalent in different places and periods.<sup>1,2,3.</sup>

In his short book on the 'Arabic Literature', Gibb calls the Abbasid age as a 'Golden Age' of Islam and states that "the Abbasids owed their elevation to alliance with the theocratic and legitimist parties among the Arabs and the support of the Persians and other subject peoples." "Self interest invoked them as patrons and encourage the talents of their Persian and Arabian subjects," he says.<sup>4.</sup>

---

1. Asif Beg, Adabiat ..... P. 53

2. Asgardari & Inani, Al-Nasir..... P. 183

3. Zaidan, Tarikh..... PP. 33, 34, 36, 38, 42, 290.

4. Gibb, Arabic Literature, PP. 33, 35.

Truly in the field of literature the Abbassids have no equal, the mighty encouragement and vital aid which they gave to all branches of literature is a significant record on the maps of the literary history of the Arabs. Neither the former decades of Islam, nor the later years could exhibit such an excellent and illustrious example of the development of Arabic literature. Since the installation of the Abbassid Caliphate at Baghdad, art and culture had no rival in their growth and almost all the Caliphs offered maximum assistance to the cause of the development of literature. The contribution made in this respect under the Abbassids is still a source of inspiration and a treasure of knowledge for those engaged in literary activity. In truth, the capital had become the centre of all literary personages of the day. They were highly honoured, elevated and bestowed with wealth and titles and had great veneration in the eyes of both the noble and the commoners. As these glorious rulers were much fond of literature, their subjects also were naturally inclined towards the same path and desired to win their favour and become close to them in this way. In these circumstances when the rulers as well as the subjects had a keen interest in literature, they held the major and the minor poet, adib and jurist, historian and mathematician,

---

Geographer and Astronomer in equal regard. All were honoured and regarded by the Caliphs, governors, Amirs and other wealthy persons. Undoubtedly the garden of literature was full of the blossoms and flowers of literary pioneers during the whole period of Abbasid reign.

In praise of Baghdad, the newly built seat of the Abbasids, Gibb states as follows:- "The new capital Baghdad, became the centre of literature and the arts, "the market" as an Arab historian calls it, to which the wares of sciences and arts were brought where vision was sought as a man seeks after his stray jewels, and whose judgments and values was accepted by the whole world." With the combination of different cultures, a new culture was born in which the Abbasids gave their full support and co-operation. In the words of Gibb "the new culture was already burgeoning, but the Abbasids by their tolerance and patronage gave it fuller scope and already contributed to its splendour." He again remarks that "with the change of dynasty, Arabic literature suddenly reached its golden age. Hitherto Muslim learning had been built up entirely by Arabs on an original plan, with almost indirect influence from the older centre of culture. At the hospitable court of the first Abbasid caliphs it not only came face to face with

---

foreign systems of thought, but what was even more important began to be studied by men whose whole mental outlook had for generations been moulded by Hellenism in one or other of its oriental offshoots..... The scholars of Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Persia hitherto confined to their narrow provincial spheres found a new freedom of circulation and from their intercourse at Baghdad and elsewhere sprang the Arabic literature of Islam. Every new development was carried rapidly to all corners of the Muslim world, and to find Spanish schools founded by scholars from the East and Persian schools founded by men who had studied in Egypt and Baghdad.<sup>5</sup>

The Abbasid age (132 A.H. to 656 A.H) was much influenced by foreign culture and civilisation socially, politically and in literary affairs. While Arabism was the chief characteristic of the Umayyad society, it was a mixture of Arabian and non Arabian elements in the Abbasid era. Moreover it seen in the former age on the vast continent of Arabia on which they ruled, was absolutely Arabian in character. But with the establishment of the Abbasid empire at Baghdad, the non Arabs mostly Persians, Greeks, Romans and such others

---

5. Gibb, Arabic Literature.

pp. 35 and 36.

were of more value to them than the pure Arab  
nationals. This was the main cause why the non Arabs  
gained prominence and occupied high offices such as the  
Commanders of the armies, Ministers of Defence and  
Communication etc. under the Abbasids. The Spirit of  
Arabianism faced crisis and day by day it weakened. A  
century had scarcely passed when the secret of  
Arabianism lost its force and vigour. Then there had been  
no special significance to mark the dignity and glory of  
the Arabians. Truly it was a war between the Arabians  
and non Arabians in which the latter achieved victory  
over the former. The time was so changed now for the  
Arabs of the desert that even their livelihood was barred  
since the reign of 'Al-Mu'awiz and they stood as equal  
footing with the common people of the day. Then they were  
compelled to adopt various vocations and professions, mix  
themselves with non Arabs, wed to their family and uphold  
the principles of new civilisation and culture of Persia.  
Their habits, characters, beliefs, ideas and customs  
were all affected by the so-called modern culture of the  
Abbasid reign. These changes, no doubt, were manifest in  
all walks of life. The Arabians thus, had to learn from  
their companions a good deal of the new characteristics  
which were prevalent throughout the Abbasid empire. Of  
course, influence and amply noticeable in Philology and

---

vocabulary, in prose and poetry, in composition and compilation etc. Gradually this tendency swept the whole empire except Spain and Africa.

Briefly according to the compilers of 'Al-Fuṣṣṭaḥ' these changes were apparent in the following three ways. Firstly, in Lexicography, Secondly in the ideas and their meaning and thirdly in words and their style. The Abbasid Caliphs, Amirs and Governors imitated the Kings of Persia, big merchants and rich men of other nationalities. This imitation was often seen in political and economical fields. The roughness and simplicity of the early period of Islam till the beginning of the Umayyad era had disappeared. Now the arts and sciences of the non Arabs were being translated into Arabic. Consequently religious, scholastic and philological works were compiled; several translations of foreign lexicons, chiefly in the field of secretarial correspondence and mathematics etc. were made; a large number of industrial centres were opened which were prospering with the participation and co-operation of the Arabs and non Arabs; various sorts of games and amusement developed and were admired by the masses; discussions on different topics, lectures, controversial matters etc. were the common affairs of the day and finally their desire for luxury and comfort played their

---

full care amongst all sections of the Abbasid society. The ambition for palaces, gardens, wine, maiden singers, slave girls, ornaments, vessels, court dignitaries, hunting birds, fishing, martial weapons etc. was a phenomena as every student of the history of this period knows. With regard to the ideas and meaning, sublime thoughts, fine imaginations and peerless fancies dominated Arabic prose and poetry both. The glory and splendour of the East was the main cause of their love for Persian Lexicography. Side by side, the rise of scholasticism, Philosophical thoughts and argumentative nature had absolutely changed the bent of their minds. Last but not the least were the words and new style of composition which had appeared with them along with other good qualities. In short simple and familiar words, beautiful sentences, firm link and ample use of Quranic quotations, were noticeable in their writing. By that time foreign words were generally used in addresses regarding variety of dishes, kinds of vessels, tools of industries and moreover abundant similes, metaphors etc. were employed. Again the mention of the palace and Amirs through their names, was further extended; rhymed prose in the new compositions and compilations as well as adoption of different names for different studies,

---



had been popular in those days.<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact all these changes were the offshoots of non Arabs' skill and intelligence. Whose culture influenced the Arabs greatly who till the Abbasid era, were ignorant of Persian, Roman and other influences. The ancient Arabs were proud of their own culture and civilisation as well as of their language and costume. This exclusive tendency and Puritan individuality of the Arabians continued upto the last decade of the Umayyads. As soon as the Abbasids came into power, the capital was shifted to Baghdad and the growth of literature and science knew no bounds. From distant places outstanding figures visited the splendid courts of the Abbasid palace of the Caliphs. The Abbasid Caliphs paid due attention to the education of their sons in order to save them from committing grammatical mistakes and also for the sake of acquisition of sound knowledge. Besides, these Caliphs and Amirs were always anxious to be surrounded and praised by the literary genre of the day. They also showed inclination to pay special attention to accelerate the academic atmosphere in their vast kingdom. None can deny that the services rendered by them have ever to be acknowledged and

---

appreciated. Indeed, the scope of Arabic literature became far advanced during the Abbasid period, no age could claim superiority to it in this particular field.

According to the compiler of Encyclopaedia of Islam "the Arabic literature of the 2nd century of Islam is sharply distinguished from that of the 1st century by two main features. In the first few centuries, the literature of an urban society concentrated for the most part in Iraq; and the majority of its producers were half Arabs or non Arabs, converts or descendants of converts from the original Armenian and Persian population. The recurring camps and developments in a literary production are more marked in prose than in verse productions."<sup>6</sup> He further remarks that "by the opening of the third century A.H. the philological, historical, legal and Quranic studies just described had laid the foundation for an Arabic Islamic prose literature which could challenge the predominance hitherto enjoyed by the secretarial school in the field of polite letters (Adab)"<sup>6</sup>.

Late Professor Ignaz Goldziher observes thus in his famous article on the "Arabic literature during the Abbasid period."

---

6. Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. 10, P. 577.

With the accession of the Abbassids fundamental changes took place in the cultural life of the Arab. Politically, the Abbassids relied chiefly on the non Arab nationalities, particularly the Iranians to whom important posts were now assigned in state life, not only informal matters but also in leading administrative matters. The Caliphs chose their advisers from among the descendants of the Iranian families; they also divested themselves of the Caliph's Arab character and regarding themselves as the successors of the Sasanian Kings and not the Arab Sheikh, assumed the attributes of the former. They even transferred their residence from the gorgeous Damascus built on the edge of the Arabian desert to the Iranian soil, first to Kufa, then to Andar, and finally to the immediate vicinity of the ancient Iranian royal seat Ctesiphon, where the new capital of Baghdad was built up. Culturally, the Abbassids fostered and led a religious life; in their eyes religion was the foremost concern of Government. Unlike the Umayyads they were no mundane rulers but Governors of a theocratic State and wielders of the supreme religious power. Consequently the change of public spirit gave a new turn to literature".

Comparing the literature of the Umayyad and Abbassid ages he adds 'whereas the literary work of the Umayyad

---

period centred on cultivating ancient Arab mind and collecting and conserving Arabic political traditions the Abbasids helped to widen the scope of culture and literature by fostering not only poetry and the prosaic kinds of light literature, Arab, but also developing to a vast extent scientific literature, Hikma. Moreover the religious tendency characteristic of the Abbasid rule furthered large scale development of religious science and literature"<sup>7</sup>.

According to E. G. Browne, Sir William Muir emphasises 3 main features which distinguish this period from the preceding one. He says "firstly, that the Caliphate was no longer co-extensive with the limits of Islam (since Spain never accepted Abbasid rule and the allegiance of Africa was fitful and imperfect); secondly, that the martial vigour of the Arabs declined along with their fervent faith, and that they ceased to play the predominant role in the history of Islam; thirdly, that Persian and later Turkish influences became all powerful at the centre of the government, now transferred from Syria to Iraq"<sup>8</sup>. This imminent writer has also expressed his views about

---

7. Somogyi, Islamic culture, July 1957.

8. Browne, Literary history of Persia pp. 432 and 7th Chapter

foreign influences that dominated the Abbasid ecology in the following words: "with the rise of Persian influences, the roughness of Arab life was softened; and there opened an era of culture, toleration and scientific research, the practice of oral tradition was also giving place to recorded statements and historical narrative - a change hastened by the scholarly tendencies introduced from the East, so the same may be attributed the over increasing laxity as courts of manners and morality; and also those transcendental views that now sprang up of the Divine Image or spiritual leadership, of some member of the house of 'Alī; as well as the rapid growth of thought, these things will be developed as we go on<sup>8</sup>."

According to E. O. Browne, Doy speaks of the results of the mixing of the Arabs with the non Arabs more clearly. He writes as follows: "the ascendancy of the Persians over the Arabs, that is to say of the conquered over the victor, had already for a long while been in course of preparation, it became complete when the Abbasids, who owed their elevation to the Persians ascended the throne. These princes made it a rule to be on their guard against the Arabs, and to put their trust only in foreigners, Persians especially those of Turan, and

---

with whom, therefore, they had to make friends. The most distinguished personages at court were consequently Persian,.... the democratic mind of view of the Arabs, indeed, replaced by the despotic ideas of the Persian"<sup>8</sup>.

Similar is the opinion of the celebrated historian, Al-Bukhari, who says : " the 'Abbasid dynasty was a treacherous, wily and faithless dynasty, wherein intrigue and guile played a greater part than strength and energy, particularly in its later days." He again describes its virtues and states thus: "Yet whilst it was a dynasty abounding in good qualities, richly endowed with generous attributes, wherein the cares of science found a ready sale, the merchandise of culture was in great demand, the observances of religion were respected, charitable requests flowed freely, the world was prosperous, the Holy Shrines were well cared for, and the frontiers were bravely kept."<sup>8</sup>.

On the development of Arabic literature during the Abbasid reign the late professor Ignaz Goldziher has remarked as follows : "However whereas during the Umayyad period the prevalence of the Arabic race was manifest in all the fields of public life, under the Abbasids, the non Arab elements increasingly gained a

---

being in politics, literature and science, the most remarkable representative of scientific literature having been sons of non Arab peoples.<sup>7</sup> About religious literature of the age he writes that "the foremost concern of the faithful was to regulate their lives according to the injunctions of the prophet; this is why they endeavored to study, besides the Koran all the sayings of the prophet.... Next to the Koran, the Sunna is the most important source of Islam.... Among the collections of this kind there are particularly two that have attained the highest degree of authority in the world of Islam for reasons both religious and literary. (a) The first is a large collection of Hadiths by Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari (d. 256/869-70) (b) a similar authenticity is attributed to the collection of Hadiths by Muslim Ibn 'Al-Hajjaj-al-Nishaburi (d. 261/874-5) a contemporary of Al-Bukhari.... The other authors of later collections are (c) Abu Da'ud Al-Sijistani (d. 275/888-9) (d) Abu Isa 'Al-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892-3) (e) Abu Abdur Rahman Al-Nisai (d. 303/915-6) (f) Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Raja Al-Qazwini (d. 283/896-7). All the six books are called Al-Kutub al-Sitta. An eminent place in theological literature is attributed to the study of the text and the exegesis of the Holy book"<sup>7</sup>.

---

Side by side, the progress in other branches of literature was also distinctly noticeable as has been depicted by the aforesaid writer in his well known article in these words: <sup>7</sup> "parallel to these studies in the 2nd/8th century, there developed jurisprudence (Figh) which investigates the rules obligatory for Muslims in both their religious practice and their worldly life and legal relation. Around some scholars of consequence there were formed different schools, Madh-hab, i.e. tendencies, of which four have remained in force up to this day. the founder Imams of these four schools are :

1. Abu Hanifa Al-Nu'man Ibn Thabit (d. 150/767)
2. Muhammad Ibn Idris Al-Shafi'i (d. 204/819-20)
3. Malik Ibn Anas (d. 197/812-13)
4. Ahmed Ibn Muhammad Ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855-6)

Besides, the Usul-Al-Figh, there is another science of Usul that has gained importance in theological literature, the Usul-Al-Din, i.e. the roots of creed dealing with the dogmatic aspect of religion.....

Closely connected with this branch of theology, was a method of Philosophy known as "Kalam" i.e. speech dialects. Its object was the philosophical formation of religious dogmas.... the pedagogic and literary development of these studies is closely connected with the institutions created by an exalted statesman, Nizamul Mulk.

---



Meanwhile, in accordance to jurisprudence (fiqh) and the dogma of creed (Usul-al-Din), another tendency in the wide field of religious literature of Islam gained ground, viz. Mysticism (al-Ishraq). The development of this tendency, the sufi, affecting the Kalam and formation of practical religion alike, penetrated into the most profound mysteries (Asrar) of religious significance and rose to the most sublime conception of the idea of God.. One of the most prominent representatives of al-Ishraq in the literature of this period and generally one of the most celebrated figures in the history of Islam is Abdal Qadir Jilani (d. 561/1165-6). A very high rank in the literature of al-Ishraq is due to several authors by their place of origin as al-Fuhrard. The most famous of them was Shahabud-din Umar al-Fuhrard (d. 652/1254-5). The most prolific representative of this branch of theology in this period was doubtless Rumi-al-Din Ibn-al-Farabi (d. 631/1240-1).<sup>7</sup>

A special place is assigned in religious literature to the sermons (Khutub) and the moralistic lectures (Dars) as the Friday and festival divine services from the sermons by the Khutib (preacher) with a high degree of eloquence. The Khutbas are usually held in the circle of Safi. The most widely known is the collection of Abul Kalam Ibn Nubata (d. 374/984-5) who was appointed as a

---

that at the court of the Hamdanid prince Sayf al-Daula, the most celebrated moralist and jurist of his age was, however, Abul Farj Abdur Rahman Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597/1200-1). At the end of the chapter figures the man who has left the most permanent traces among all the scholars of Islam and who has ever been revered as the greatest teacher of Islam, Abu Rasid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111-12). His epoch making work is "Ihya' Ulum al-Din" i.e. the revival of the sciences of religion.<sup>7</sup>

As far as the development of Arabic prose literature is concerned, it would be worthwhile to mention it at this place in order to have a glance at all the branches of Arabic literature, chiefly because 'Inqas' is also one of the species of this kind of literature. The late professor Ignaz Goldziher has described it in detail which runs as follows :-

" While poetry had numerous antecedents from the pre-Islamic period, the initiative of the state was taken for the other section of prose literature, artistic prose, verily of any account. The cultivation of artistic <sup>prose</sup> in Arabic literature was due to the circumstances that as early as the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate the rulers ordered a great many narrative works to be translated from foreign languages.

---

Arabic. At the same time scientific and philological works were caused to be translated from Greek and Syriac into Arabic. Such works appearing in Arabic gave the impulse to creating the original Arabic artistic prose. The most celebrated of these translations has been up to this day the *Book of Optics* and *Almagest*, the Arabic translation of the Hindu work *Panchatantra*, made at the time of the Caliph Al-Mansur from the Middle Persian or Pahlvi recension of it.... The need for opportunity for cultivating artistic prose was confined itself to those officials of high rank whose duty was to draft official documents and carry on the political correspondence of their rulers.... The Abbasids of the Umayyad period employed a very simple official style, and it was not until the third period that with the development of general education and the change of literary taste, another tendency became manifest in this domain. The sophisticated and soaring style, the employment of rhetorical art, and the introduction of the *fajr* into prosaic writing became more and more prevalent under the Abbasids.... Thus a veritable high school of artistic prose came into being. The highest of this kind of literature was reached by Ibrahim Ibn Hilal al-Gabi (d. in 371). The chief of the chancery *Diwan al-Rasail* of the

---

Buyide prince, 'Isa-b-musa, who also wrote the history of Buyide in his Kitab al-Jalal (The book of the Crown)"<sup>9</sup>

About the grandeur and pomp of the Arabic artistic prose and particularly its unique branch known as Maqama (situation or assembly), the distinguished above scholar has expressed his opinion in this manner: "Arabic artistic prose has reached its highest perfection in what is peculiar development of Arabic literature, the Maqama, i.e., the Situation. As a rule, the form work of the Maqama is as follows:— An adventurous and not at all earnest man endowed with great talents, many sided scientific knowledge and crafts, knows about the whole world. In different circles he displays now this, now that quality of his, and in each of his pages he addresses his audience and enlists their sympathy with his forged narrative, so that he is richly rewarded every time.... In these recitals the form is determined by the highest mastery of the language, the narrative is in continued 'raj', carried with the shrewdest witicism; in a clear contents the various experience of the Maqama and the richness of the knowledge which is taken for granted, prevail in the most profuse manner"<sup>9</sup>. Again he evaluates the literary value of the Maqama and reveals the liberality of its originator thus:— "In his

---

9. Faruqi, Islamic Culture pp. 307, 309, 311.

different situations and here displays the breadth of knowledge that is connected with the marriage bond; he quotes and employs the ancient poems, but being a poet himself, he also provokes the sympathy of his audience with his own poems which change with the situations. Ahmad al-Hamadhani (d. 398/1007-8) at the age of 40 was, as his name implies, of Iranian extraction, and spent his whole life on Iranian soil. He was the first to cultivate the qaṣida on a huge scale in Arabic literature.... The height of the development of the style of qaṣida was reached one century later by Abu Muhammad al-Ḥafiz Ibn 'Alī al-Hariri (d. 515/1121-2) born at Samarra who devoted himself to philological studies in which branch he wrote very remarkable works<sup>9</sup>.

The fusion of Arabian and non-Arabian elements during the Abbasid reign had created a magnificent appearance of various cultural movements. In truth, these cultural currents developed a variety of significant Arabic prose of its own fashion. No doubt, there emerged a remarkable prose literature in Arabic that had no match in its particular design and style. The historians have pointed out that four cultures had spread in the Muslim world during the Abbasids and had greatly affected the people and

---

literature. They were as follows:- 1. Persian culture  
2. Greek culture 3. Indian culture and no. 4. Arabian  
culture.<sup>10</sup>

As far as the first cultural movement i.e. the Persian culture is concerned, it must be understood that this culture spread in the early days of the Abbasid dynasty owing to the following reasons :- (i) the establishment of the office of vizier and the dignity and glory and (ii) the transfer of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad or in other words from Syria to Iraq. Primarily the office of vizier was introduced by the Persians but it became popular amongst the Abbasids. Thus those who were the first to be appointed as vizier, were the Persians. Truly it was Abu Talib al-Muhallabi, a Persian officer (i.e. Mawla), who was the first Abbasid vizier. As the office of vizier required considerably command over writing or mastery of pen, the Persians were experts in this art. Most of these viziers were outstanding figures of their age in the field of writing. It is no doubt, a fact that most of these secretaries (Kuttab) were Persians who acted as viziers.

According to Ahmed Amin, it has been stated by Al-Jahshiyari that gradually a class of Kuttab appeared which was well acquainted with the conditions

---

10. Ahmed Amin, *Dehshat-e-Islam* pp. 101, 105, 110, 111, 109, 110, 111.

of the people and had a vast knowledge of such subjects as lexicography, Belles-lettres (Arabic) literature, Philosophy, Geography and history. As an example the Abbasid al-Kasib of Ibn Qutayba may be cited. The transfer of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad was another factor which led the Persian culture to affect the Abbasid society. As the helpers of the new empire were in majority in Iraq, the capital was transferred from Syria to Iraq. The Persian culture was dominant in Iraq; it had also been an abode of Sassanids and when the Persians achieved power they encouraged their own culture. In the meantime a large number of philological works were transmitted from Persian into Arabic. In fact, Persian culture had originated since ancient times, as they were the rulers of a vast empire since long. In the Abbasid era, as stated earlier, when the Persian subjects were in majority, they began to translate their literary heritage into Arabic.<sup>10</sup>

According to Ahmad Amin, it has been said by Ibn Khaldun that the greatest factor that influenced the Islamic culture was the outburst of learning and knowledge which took place during the Abbasid regime. Most of these learnings were non-Arabian in origin, and even if some of these were Arabian in reference, they were non-Islamic with regard to Philology, sources and development. As the

---

arts are characteristics of culture and civilisation which depended upon various kinds of knowledge, all were found among the Persians and thus the Beduin Arabs learned them from these non Arabians.<sup>10</sup>

In a glance, Imam Abu Hanifa, leader of the Hanafi school; Hammad Al-Zayla'i, compiler of the Mu'talagh; Bashshar b. Bard, a modern Abbasid poet; Sibawayh the head of Grammarians and Compilers; Al-Tinnisi, an eminent figure in grammar, Koranic criticism and lexicography; Al-Farra, leader of the Hufi school of grammar, lexicon and other literary arts; Abu'Ubayda, a distinguished figure in lexicography arts, battle-days (i.e. Ayyamul-'Arab) etc; Abul-A'ashiyah, a religious and philosophical poet and Ibn al-Arabi, one of the celebrated literary historians, were all Persians, who had greatly influenced the Arabian Islamic culture.<sup>10</sup>

The second cultural movement was due to the Indians with whom the Arabs had commercial relations since long. Later on, the Arabs captured some parts of the Indian sub continent, through the efforts of the Persians and also due to commercial bonds with the Indians, the Arabs became more acquainted with them. Al-Jahiz states in his encyclopaedia (Sana'il) that Indians were famous for mathematics, astronomy, medicine, picture making etc.

---



again, Al-Jahiz in his reputed book 'Tarajim al-Arab' and  
Al-Buhārī in his 'Mabāziz al-Udaba' have praised the  
Indians for their vast learning and great ability.  
Indian discourses on religion, philosophy and mathematics  
had actually influenced the Arabians; many Indian words  
such as Al-Sindh-Bad, etc. were arabicized or transmitted  
into Arabic.

The last but not the least, is the Greek and  
Roman culture. Several Greek words were translated into  
Arabic during the Abbasid period, e.g. the important  
works of Aristotle and some writings of Platon, etc.  
Chiefly, Greek philosophy influenced the Arabians. The  
most eminent translator of this age was Ibn al-Haytham.

In the third and fourth centuries of Islam  
the academic scene in the Abbasid empire was quite  
different from the earlier periods. It was indeed a  
golden age in all respects and the learned men had  
compiled as well as translated books into Arabic from  
other languages. As wealth is always unequally  
distributed in every age, the Abbasid period is also no  
exception to this general rule. When the palaces of the  
Caliphs and Amirs were crowded with opulent men and  
outstanding literateurs, the poor and needy were  
suffering from poverty and want. In such circumstances

---

is as natural that the Arabic literature was influenced<sup>11</sup> by the critical conditions of the age.

Thus all the literary productions of the 3rd and 4th century A.H. vividly reflected the social and economic conditions of the people. Al-Jah'libi has cited many such examples in his well known book, 'Yatim al-Nahr'. Besides, the exquisite writings in prose of Ibn Al-'Amid, Ibn 'Abbad, Al-Thurayyih, Sadi' al-Tarab al-Rasadani, Abulhayyan al-Ashidi and others, along with the poetic compositions of Al-Mutanabbi, Ibn al-Majaj, Ash'al-Razi, Abul 'Ala al-Ma'rri and Al-Ganabari have clearly depicted the feelings and sentiments of their epoch. Their writings bear a true picture of the Muslim people.

Further it is a firmly established rule that politics always dominate literature and the latter is produced in harmony with the former in every period. The result is that the literature of the Umayyads is truly 'Peoples literature' (i.e. Adab al-Ahbab) or more accurately a national literature (i.e. Adab al-Ummah). Even in the first and second Abbasid era, Persian, Greek and Indian Philosophy entered the Arabic lexicon and enriched the latter. With the birth of such celebrated figures as

---

11. Ahmed Amin, *Tuhaf al-Islam* pp. 97, 115, 132, 263 (Vol I)  
pp 270, 296 (Vol II)

Ibn al-Jayfi, al-Jahiz, Ibn al-Nadim and others, men  
and varied subjects matters were introduced into the  
Arabic literature and they created a novel and charming  
style of composition. Eminent poets of the age, like  
Bashshar Ibn Burd and Abu Nuwas, painted a fine picture  
of the social life of their time and other poets talked  
in their rhettorics. Finally in the 4th century A.H. the  
studies of arts and sciences had become much developed  
and were ripe to display their achievements. The official  
secretaries (Kutab) and poets created new meaning and  
discovered new styles in the current Arabic literature, as  
a result of which a new piece of their work appeared  
in Arabic prose and poetry. Truly, the condition of the  
4th Abbasid period (i.e. 347-656 A.H.) was similar to  
the first Abbasid period (i.e. 132-232 A.H.), when Indian,  
Greek, Persian and Arabian culture had mixed with each  
other and so they had become a single culture. The Muslims  
of the early Abbasid era had cultivated a new culture  
when they had mixed with other races and creeds. This 4th  
century of Islam is similar to the first Abbasid era  
in those respects and the discussion that 'Islamic culture  
itself' proves to be correct. Briefly the 4th century A.H.  
brought forth its literary figures in all the fields of  
learning and knowledge. Their literary outlook is a  
matchless record, unsurpassable by any other age in the pages  
of history.

---

It would be interesting to lay down in a few words what the 8th century A.H. produced, talented and intelligent figures in all avenues of knowledge and learning e.g. Al-Guburi and Al-Jahash in jurisprudence; Al-Hicabur in tradition; Abu Ali Al-Farsi, Ibn Duraid, Ibn al-Jiani in grammar and lexicography; Al-Musanabbi, Abu Faras, al-Nashi, Ibn Hajjaj, Ibn Sufarra in poetry; Al-Fabi, al-Thumari, al-Hamadhani in Adab (Belles-lettres); al-Jahri, Asma Basha in history; al-Istakhsi in geography; Ibn Maqla in epistle writing; al-Jubai, 'Abd al-Rasid al-Ashari in scholasticism; Ibn Mubarrad in Thilasa (public address). Of course all these writers are reliable historians of the decaying Abbasid period. Their accounts are priceless documents of the age in which they lived.

In short, it would be correct to say that the Abbasid reign (750-656 A.H.) was fully mature and developed in all branches of literature. In these circumstances, the composition of assemblies by 'Adib' al-Rasid al-Hamadhani was natural, because this was the very time when such artistic prose in Arabic literature was needed to be produced. Al-Hamadhani, however, realising the demand of his age and land of exquisite writings in Arabic prose, especially the dramatic style, created his wonderful Maqamat which won lofty admiration from literary circles of the world.

---

Chapter II

"Origins and early development of 'maqamat', how far 'maqamat' was influenced in its form and contents by Greek and Persian literatures."

The history of Arabic literature does not shed much light on the origin of the 'maqamat'. Despite my earnest and conscientious efforts to discover their origin, I have found out that only a few writers have turned their attention towards this subject in the past. It is nothing but surprising that even great historians and prominent men of letters did not deem it necessary to elucidate this issue; hence the latter writers gave up the idea of answering this question in a precise manner. It is still a mystery as to how this novel art originated and who was its originator. A great number of writers have touched the second point, and have written on the theme of 'maqamat'. They have not expressed their view on the birth of the 'maqamat'. The dispute about the first creator of the 'maqamat' has, however, attracted a good deal of the attention of the later writers of the 'maqamat' and those who wrote on this artistic prose literature. This controversy has extended upon the present time and most of them have their firm faith and conviction in favour of Al-Hariri and denounced and ridiculed the merits of his predecessor Al-Muhammadi.

In this chapter I shall deal with the origin of the

---

Maqamat and described the different usages in which the word 'Maqamat' was used. I shall also try to reflect on the present meaning of the word as well as the source from which it is derived. Thus, a detailed study of the word is given below for the purpose of clarifying this issue.

As a matter of fact, the word 'Maqamat' was used in different periods for different meanings, but the current meaning was adopted during the Abbasid reign by no one else than its first producer, Zaid'ul-Janan-al-Hamadani. According to C. Brockelmann, 'Maqamat' (A), is a variety of Arabic prose of a highly elaborate and artificial nature." Again he says that the 'Maqamat' in classical language was the name for the assembly of the scribe, synonymous with *ma'di*<sup>1</sup>, as noticed by Tabbai which runs thus :-

2. *وَمَقَامُهُ غَلَبَ الزَّيْنَابُ كَأَنَّهُمْ جُنُودٌ لَدَى طَرَفِ الْخَصِيرِ نِيَامُ*

(or as described by Salama-ibn Jandal in Al-Mufaddaliyyat, by al-Mufaddal-al-Dibbi in which Salama-ibn Jandal said,

3. *يَوْمَانِ يَوْمُ مَقَامَاتٍ وَأَنْدَمِيهِ وَيَوْمُ سَيْبٍ إِلَى الْأَعْمَدِ لَمْ تُأْدِيبِ*

(or as noticed in the verse of al-Jalal-al-'Alabi, as thus:-

4. *لَشَدِيدُ زَيْدٍ وَأَوَّلُ الْمَقَامَةِ بَيْنَنَا وَذُرِّيَّةُ إِرَاقٍ مَجْرُودٍ مَسْتَمِ*  
 Here the word " *أَوَّلُ الْجَمْعِ بَيْنَنَا حَافِرُونَ* " means " *وَالْمَقَامَةُ بَيْنَنَا* "

i.e. the people who attend an assembly (audience).

A verse quoted by Tabbai-b Hamam al-'Abai shows the word

'Maqam' in its true meaning. It is as follows :-

4. فحل مقاماً لم تكن لبته عزيزاً على عبيد وزببان زائده

Here the word 'Maqam' is used in the sense of 'rank' or 'position'. The meaning is similar in a way to the sense borrowed from 'Maqamat' used in the ancient poetry. The argument is that a position or rank could only be achieved in the eyes of Bedouin Arabs, if one could display his extraordinary skill, diligence and virtue among them at a place where they assembled.

Again, Lebid in his above anthology has cited a verse in the sense derived from the word 'Maqam', which runs thus:-

2. أبلى أبا الحرز يوم مقامة يمتنع أضياف ومأوى مقمة

Here " يوم مقامة " means the 'day of gathering or assembly.'

The same theme is narrated by Al-Harithani in his 'Maqamat'. "Al-Maqamat-al-Ashia" runs thus:-

5. "حدثني عيسى بن مشام قال: كان يلقيني من شابات الاسكندرية وشالدين  
ما لقيت اليه النفوس... الخ

1. Brockelmann, Encyclopaedia of Islam 2, 161
2. Brockelmann, Diwan Lebid, 2, 39
3. Al-Habbi, Al-Mufaddaliyat 2, 66
4. Abu Jannan, Al-Hamasa 1, 104, 211
5. Abdurru, Maqamat al-Harithani 2, 25, 11.

Next, in his 'Al Maqam al-Jurjania' there is a verse of Zuhair which runs as follows :-

5. *وفينا مقامات حسان وجوههم وأندية شيا بها القول والفعل*

The similar idea is conveyed by Abu Lammam in the following verse:-

6. *في كل معترك وكل مقامه يأخذن منه ذمّة وعهوداً*

Here 'Maqam' means 'Assembly of the tribe'.

Shortly, the word 'Maqam' has been used in various senses in the ancient Arabic poetry. Sometimes it is spoken for the 'Assembly of the tribe' and sometimes for 'Hadi' i.e. speaker as an assembly, e.g. in the noted verse of Zuhair quoted above, the word Maqam stands for 'Assembly of the tribe', while in Lubb's words it is used for a group of people which an assembly contains or for its Hadi (the speaker).

The eminent author of Subh al-Ashar has given the meaning of 'Maqam' in the first chapter beginning with 'Maqam' in the following manner:- "This word (Maqam) is plural of Maqama, with a 'Fatha' on 'Ma'. Its root in lexicon is Ma, i.e. it is named for an assembly of the tribe (i.e. Mujlis or Jam'at al-Asabiya) and a conversation in an assembly for the audience is also called after the word 'Maqam'. Du. 'Maqam' with 'Ma





'Maqam and Maqama are equal to Mahan and Mahana. Primarily its meaning was 'Mawza'ul 'ayam' i.e., a place of residence. After wards it stood for the place and accordingly itself o.p. 9,10 " مقاماً محموداً " ; " خير مقاماً واحسن نداءً " Here Maqam stands for place . Again the poet Hahshai Ibn Jari al-Darimi says :-

10. انا لفرنا في المعامه مالكا نكر المسافر اين ضوء الزفر

In the aforeroid example Maqama means place; & on a place where a preacher delivers his sermon or address itself is named as Maqama. It is also called 'ajlis i.e., assembly. Instances of 'Maqamat al-Thutba' & 'ajalis al-'is are frequently available in Arabic literature, where 'Maqamat' stands for those who attend such assemblies or 'Maqamat.

To understand its meaning clearly the following verse of Muhaihil which explains 'ajlis' or the assembly which Maqama means , may be cited : -

10. نبئت ان النار بعدك اوقدت واستب بورك يا مكيب المحبس

In the words of 'Abu 'Ali al-Gali, 'Maqama' is a 'ajlis or an assembly'. Further, 'Al-Hamadani has mentioned its meaning in his Maqama in several -ays o.p. 7, ' ومن عالا لا تخم فتح مقامهم ' and ' من يات بالمقامات ' 11. 'Abu Jharwan has also used this word in the above sense. To say :-

11. وفي كل مشترك وكل مقام ياخذن منه ذمته ومحموداً فان شجرة المعامه يومه فصل رأيت ظهيرة لقمان الحكيم

9. Zayf, Al-Maqamat pp. 7, 8

10 Al-Zawakhshari, Maqamat pp. 13.

11. Siddiqi, Ibn al-Hariri pp. (introduction)

Briefly, in the first stage 'aqam and 'aqara were used in the sense of residential place or assembly of the tribe as stated by C. Brockelmann; secondly in the sense of meetings called by preachers in which the audience participated, the well known Mu'allaga poet, al-Zuhair, has called the people who attended such assemblies as 'aqama. Another Bedouin poet Muhallil, means by it the assembly' (Majlis) itself instead of the people who attended it.

Later on it was used for everything - said or addressed in an assembly or crowd e.g. Kalan, 'Uyayah, Khugba etc.<sup>11</sup> and Maqamat al-Zuhra or 'aqama al- (iss). In both these examples the word 'aqama is used in accordance with the situation.

Abu Jharman has also used 'aqama in the same sense in this verse:-

11. *وَسَامَةٌ قَبْلَ الْكَلَامِ سَلَامٌ لِّقَوْلِهَا غَزْوَةً لَا تَجْلَى*  
Maqamat Hariri are also produced in this very sense.  
Al-Jahiz has stated :- *وَمِنْ الشُّرَاةِ الشَّامَةِ وَالْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَالْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ*  
and Al-Hamadani has also remarked:- *أَنَا صَبْرٌ عَلَيْهِ إِلَى آخِرَتَانِهِ*

Consequently in the earliest stage the word Maqama stood for assembly of the tribe synonymous with

---

radi, as stated by C. Brockelmann, Nagara was now  
 applied to gatherings at which the Umayyad and early  
 Abbasid Caliphs received pious men in order to hear  
 edifying discourses from them<sup>12</sup> as for example as  
 Hisham did with Khalid Ibn Safran; the incident is related  
 as follows :-

”حدثنا عن خالد بن مخلد بن النعمان قال اذ كنت في دمشق بن عمار الى مشام بن عبد الملك في وفد اهل العراق  
 قال فقد رتب عليه وفد فخرج لجزائره وحشمه وغاشية وجلسا كنه فنزل في أرض قاع صبح . . . . .  
 اخذ الناس جبالهم قال فافترجت رأس من ناحية السماء فانظر الى شبه المستنق في اقطعت لهم  
 . . . . . الخ

or as is related in Siraj al-Tuluk of al-Urcushi:-

”الباب الثاني في مقامات العلماء والصالحين عند الامراء والسلاطين  
 دخل الاحنف بن قيس على معاوية . . . الخ

or as is described in Tkd al-Farid, by Ibn Abd Abbih:-

”قام صالح بن عبد الجليل بن مريم المحمد بن فقال له . . . الخ  
 (قام رجل من القبادقة المنصور) بنما المنصور في اللواف ليل اذ سمع حائلا يقول . . . الخ  
 (قام الدوزاعي) بن مريم المنصور . . . قال الدوزاعي دخلت عليه فقال لي . . . الخ  
 (كلام أبي حازم كسليمان بن عبد الملك . . . الخ  
 (قام ابن السماك) عنه الزشيه . . . دخل عليه فلما وقف بين يديه قال له . . . الخ

12. Brockelmann, Encyclopaedia of Islam v. 161  
 13. Al-Ash'ari, Al-Aghani no. 53, 54  
 14. Al-Urcushi, Siraj al-Tuluk no. 24 no 2  
 15. Ibn Abdabbih, Tkd al-Farid no. 93 no 57.

The word 'uqama shu came to have the more general meaning of lecture.<sup>16</sup> Jahiz in his Kitab al-Bukhala has used it along with poetry, proverbs and tales of battles as an essential element in Arab education. The following is an extract from Kitab al-Bukhala:

”قد جعل الله عز وجل لكل شئ قدراً ولو أله سوطاً كما جعل لكل دعراً جالداً وكل شئ مقاماً مقالداً“  
.....  
16, 17

at another place he has written :-

”قالوا) كان عبد النور كاتب ابراهيم بن عبد الله بن الحسن قد استخفى بالبصرة في عبد القيس من امير المؤمنين ابي جعفر وعلم اليه وكان في غرفة مدهامها جناح..... والقدم عرب وكانوا الفيضون في الحديث وغير كرون من الشعر المشاهد والمثل ومن الخبر الذي ايام والمقامات وصوفي ذلك“  
.....  
17.

In both these instances 'uqama and 'uqamaq convey a wide and general meaning just like lecture which consists of poetry, idioms, tales of battle, etc.

According to Brockelmann in the third century A.D. the word 'uqama began to sink from the higher sphere; it became the name for a beggar's street tale, and so to

---

16. Brockelmann, Encyclopaedia of Islam v. 161

17. Jahiz, Al-Bukhala pp. 15, 217, 218.

framed in carefully chosen language; moreover the literary training of the Adib, once a privilege of court circles, became disseminated among the people; an example of these appeals is preserved by Jahiz in Bayhaqi's *Kitab Al-Mahasin 'al Hasawi*.<sup>18</sup> It runs as follows :-

”(محاسن السؤال) قال الجاحظ سمعت شيخنا من الحكماء يقول في وقته التقي مع شاب<sup>18</sup> منهم قريب العهد  
بالصناعة فسأله الشيخ عن حاله فقال لعن الله الكذبة ولعن أصحابها من صناعتهم ما أضلها  
وأضلها... وان للكثير من رجالها فساد... أن الكذبة صناعتهم شريفة وهي محببة لذية  
صاحبها في نفيم...“

From the aforesaid examples it may easily be understood what type of appeals they contained and in what manner fine ideas were put into them. It also refers to a particular tribe of beggars which was most popular in the 3rd and 4th centuries and was named 'Mukdini' (i.e. beggars who earned their living by deceit and fraud).<sup>19</sup> I shall discuss this class of mendicancy in the next chapter. It appears from the above example that 'Kudia' or mendicancy was not an easy vocation that might be practised by all persons irrespective of the skill and cleverness. Those who were experienced in this art their life was successful, while others who had less skill failed to achieve their object.

18. Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Mahasin p. 217

19. Ghazawi, Al-Adab.... pp. 209

In character of C. Brockelmann the article of  
beggars seem to have paved the way for the literary genre  
proper. His own existence as Haradani. He created  
a typical representation of this literary Ethiopianism to  
which he himself belonged which entered upon the  
inheritance of Haja, poets of the early days of Islam,  
like Al-Huzayn<sup>20</sup>

In an article Joseph Comotti has translated the  
word *Maqama* as 'situation' which seems to be more  
appropriate than its other translations in English. The  
learned translator has given an outline of *Maqama* in  
his charming words. The following is an extract from  
the said article: "Arabic artistic prose has reached  
its highest perfection in what is a peculiar development  
of Arabic literature, the *Maqama* or situation. As a  
rule the frame work of the *Maqama* is as follows; an  
adventurous and not as all earnest man endowed with  
high great talents, many sided scientific knowledge and  
craft, knocks about the whole world. In different circles  
he displays now this, now that, quality of his and in each  
of his parts he astounds his audience and excites their  
sympathy with his forged narrative, so that he is nicely  
presented everywhere. In the different situation of his  
wanderings *Maqama* he happens to meet with one and the  
same old acquaintance of his, who, himself, *Maqama*

---

20. Brockelmann, Encyclopaedia of Islam 3, 161

much, always witnesses the false behaviour of our hero, recognises him, and expresses his disapproval as his comority. However, the adventurer has always a strategic head and obviates the danger of the imminent disclosure of his situation. Thereupon he leaves the situation and soon appears in some other place and in another way he meets with his old acquaintance again with the same result. This latter is usually introduced as a narrator (saj'). In these recitals the form is determined by the highest mastery of the language; the narration is in continued saj', marked with the shrewdest wit; in their sentences the various experience of the past and the richness of the knowledge which is taken for granted, prevail in the most profuse manner. In his different situations the hero displays the breadth of knowledge and the connection with the appropriate facts; he grasps and employs the ancient and modern sciences and himself, he also awakes his old acquaintance and seeks to reveal the situation.<sup>21</sup>

So far as the discussion<sup>was</sup> about different meanings of the words *maqam* and *maqamat* in different periods and different stages of development, I have tried to provide as much information as possible about it until it attained its highest point with the appearance

---

21. Faruqi, Islamic culture (1954) p. 511



of the Maqamat of Al-Hamadhani and Al-Kariri. Then and then alone the literary world realized how much perfection the Arabic artistic prose had attained. This unique literary form was praised in such a lofty manner that some European writers like Nicholson declared its triumph over all literary productions since the days of Jahiliyya with the single exception of the Holy Quran.

The conclusion reached after such a detailed study of the word is that the present form of Maqamat has no relations with the meanings applied to it in pre-Islamic or Umayyad periods. It is noteworthy that till the days of Al-Hamadhani no one knew the present character and style of the Maqamat. Hence the meanings explained earlier were only to show its antique use and as a later stage its adoption in the current form. The turning point in the history of Arabic prose literature in this regard was the composition of the Maqamat by Al-Hamadhani and a century later the glorious style which Al-Kariri adopted for his assemblies. But how much story telling was popular with and fascinating to them, is a matter of great interest to be related at this place.

In the aforesaid article the learned scholar has expressed his opinion thus: "Story telling has ever been a favourite occupation in the Orient, especially

---

in countries of the Arabic tongue, though the stories which have been known a long time by word of mouth only are today in printed editions in every body's hand. Such story tellers are called *haddaths* (the raiser), after laudatory narratives on the heroes of the story (*hikaya* from *Hikaya*, narrative). Accompanied usually by some instrument used as reciting the verses interwoven in the stories, they continuously tell to their audiences a cycle of stories, each from the legendary literature so popular with the Arabs. In the first place there is the *Qissat Anwar* (the narrative of Anwar's exploits), the language and the interwoven poems of which are supposed a higher degree of culture. On the basis of this interesting work they originated several other similar collection of stories about other heroes of the Arab nation. The first *Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazan* (the romance of Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazan) is especially received with much enthusiasm. It is narrated in a romantic manner about wonderful stories, wars and other vicissitudes of the saudi Arabian kings and hero Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazan. Besides this, voluminous work, the romantic narratives of *Janu Hail* are also widely spread; they refer to the fights and wanderings of this heroic tribe, to their penetration into North Africa and the adventure concomitant with this enterprise. To the same category belong the stories about the fights of the tribe of *Tanagi* and other romantic narratives in

---

connection with Arab national life. As a rule the style of Sa'ī is employed in this kind of literature but they also abound in metric verses interwoven in the prosaic narrative.<sup>22</sup>

A minor writer has secured the same popularity of the artistic prose works in Arabic in the literary circles of the time, as they contain various types of narrative in these words, "Finally Arabic artistic prose included a profuse variety of narrative works. Among them the collection of narratives as *Alf-Layla wa-Layla* (A thousand and one nights) has become very famous in the, not only in Arabic but in world's literature. The collection can be traced back to the same origin as the *Tellilavadiyana*. Its oldest constituent parts are Persian tales of Indian origin under the title of *Bazar Afrang* (a thousand tales) which were known in Arabic translation as early as the third/nine or fourth/ten century...."<sup>23</sup>

As far as the question of the origin of the *Maqamat* is concerned it is a disputed issue. Nothing has been decided finally so far, though the Arabic prose especially the *Maqamat* writing, has attained its climax in the modern times. Hence it must be studied with due care and caution. The word *Maqama*, as cited earlier, recalls the years of the Ignorance i.e. the *Jahiliyya* period. Later on, it was used in various senses as

---

22. Samoyi, Islamic culture (vol. 57) p. 512

23. Samoyi, Islamic culture (vol. 57) p. 512.

different time. Its origin no doubt, remained a mystery because no writer could definitely trace the numerous sources from where it was derived and developed by the so-called originator, Badī' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani. Thus the credit of the first masterpiece production of the language that achieved popularity among the literary genres goes to the illustrious writer entitled 'the father of prose'.

As a matter of fact the stories and tales were popular among the Arabs even before the birth of Islam. A large number of Arabian legends were in vogue, some of which are still preserved in the ages of history. It is one of the brightest literary chapters which witnesses their sharp intellect. In the days of the Jahiliyya these stories fell into different categories, for example 'the battle days' (Ayyam al-'Arab) contained the battles which were waged among the Arabian tribes in the pre-Islamic period. The battles of 'Dhi al-Qadha', 'al-Bijjar' and 'al-Talab' are the best examples for such kind of stories. Secondly there were stories of battles which took place between the Arabs and other nations, e.g. the Battle of Tondar which occurred between the Shabaniya and the Persians.

It is worthy to note on my side, these stories

---

were common amongst the Arabs in the days of the Jahiliyya as well as after the rise of Islam. Several such accounts are given by the celebrated author of 'Iktal-Parid'. They are also related by Al-Zaidani in his maxims. But it is also true to say that the story tellers have sometimes exaggerated and distorted the facts.<sup>24,25</sup>

The erotic accounts are largely available in literary books, e.g. 'The tale of Al-Manakhkh-al-yashkikhri and Al-Mufajjarida', the wife of Hothan, a chieftain of the Arabs. There were also stories which the Arabians borrowed from others and changed them in accordance with their own taste e.g. the story of Shereek and 'undhir. It is said that Shereek took surety to a person named Hanzala on the ominous day (i.e. Yawm-i-Bad) and on Hanzala's keeping his words and coming at the fixed time 'undhir banned this vicious custom forever. It is a well known fact that the origin of this story goes back to the Greek legends. Thus it may be said that the Arabs learnt Greek accounts and moulded them according to their own choice. Similarly they learnt many stories from the Persians in the pre-Islamic days and narrated them just as tales were narrated in Aghas.<sup>24, 25</sup>

In the resumed work, 'Sirat Ibn Nisham' as remarked by the compiler of Fajrul Islam, it is related

---

24. Ahmed Amin, Fajrul Islam no. 64, 67

25. Zaidan, Tarikh... pp. 290, 292, 295

that Nadr Ibn al-Harith, who was one of the Sages of  
of the tribe of Qureish, went to Hira, acquired  
knowledge of the accounts of the Persian Emperors as well  
as of Rustam and Isfandiyar. He used to narrate them  
in opposition to the messages of the Prophet of Islam.

The popularity of his stories during Jahiliyya  
is manifest from the aforesaid fact which are usually  
found in all historical works. The accounts of the past  
nations were popular during the Caliphate as well and  
there is no doubt that some of the Caliphs themselves  
wished to know about the past affairs especially due to  
some political reasons for the administration of the  
Empire. Al-Asma'Uddi, one of the greatest historians of his  
age has stated that the first Umayyad Caliph, Mu'awiyah,  
used to hear stories after performing his daily duties  
till one-third night passed. These stories generally  
consisted of the accounts of previous wars and news of the  
Arabs as well as of the non-Arabs and their emperors  
together with their administration, their treatment of  
the subjects and such other affairs. The account of the  
Caliph Mu'awiyah is nicely depicted by many other writers  
too. They have stated that a beautiful maiden used to  
present sweetmeats to him after one-third of night had  
passed and the Caliph used to take rest in the second part  
of night to an extent of one-third night. In the last one-

---

third night he used to get up from his sleep and official records were presented to him. These documents consisted of the biographies of the past kings, their administrative affairs, battles, plots and such other matters. All these papers were read by the Children (Boardless boys) whose duty was to learn and relate them before the king is ruler.<sup>26</sup>

As different peoples who had their own developed civilisation and culture had embraced Islam, their ancient heritage was transmitted into Arabic and was popularly amongst the masses. This enormous material came in the possession of the Arabs through the Persians, Jews, Christians and others who had accepted Islam as their religion. The Muslims since then began to collect all these accounts and developed a keen interest in ancient tales. Story telling was popular even in the days of the prophet. Even Shahab has related that the first story teller in the mosque of the Prophet was Ammar-Darmi. He was a Christian belonging to Yemen who had embraced Islam in the ninth century A.H. Among the stories he had related were included those of Al-Jassas and Al-Dajjal. Some writers have pointed out that he was a Bishop of his time and was the foremost story teller.

Al-Laith Ibn Ra'd has divided the tales into

---

26. Ahmed Amin, Fajr al Islam no. 68, 156

two kinds:- (i) those of general nature, when the people are assembled and they are advised and stories are related. Such stories are unsuitable to both the speaker and the audience. (ii) the proper stories, such as heard by Caliph Mu'awiyah who had appointed a particular person for the purpose. In Ibn Sa'id's opinion it was the best way of story telling.<sup>27</sup>

According to Jurji Zaidan narratives (Riwayah) are known as 'romances' by the Europeans but the Arabs call them stories. The former display their splendid art in the form of literature but in Arabic it is one of the weakest branches of Belles-letters (Adab).<sup>28</sup> Through these stories the Arabs present various characters, their habits and manners. Sometimes they present such stories in the form of drama. It is undoubtedly a fact that the Arabs did not pay attention to the drama in the early days of their rule. They did not further take any notice of it when they translated the Greek literature into Arabic. This is why they did not translate Eliad and Aeneid or other such works from the Roman and Greek literature. Indeed, authors like Abdullah Ibn Al-Muqaffa' and Jabal Ibn Salim transmitted some writings of this kind from Persian and Indian literature. The works translated from Persian include Kalilahadithna, Bustowaisfindiyar, Al-Adab Al-Kabir, Hazar Afsanah etc. From the Indian sources, Sindbad

---

27. Ahmed Amin, Fajrul Islam pp. 156, 158, 159

28. Zaidan, .arikh.... v. 292



Budasif, Adab al-Hind and some other works were translated. But the passage of time obliterated many such translations and even those which are available at present are not free from changes. The stories which are found till this age and are famous among the readers are the tales of Anasir, Alfiyala Layla, Abu Sayd al-Hilali and a few others. It is generally said that many such stories <sup>were composed</sup> after the third century A.H. or about that time.<sup>29</sup> 30

The Magamat are also stories irrespective of their being artificial and ingenuous compositions. The stories related by the Arabs contain various objects of glory and pride found in the pre-Islamic days. All these stories have bravery, fulfilling promises, performing duties to their neighbours, taking revenge and such other qualities as their subject matters. The names of most of these story tellers have disappeared due to the passage of time. It was in the 3rd century of the Abbasid rule that the art of story telling became matured and the Arabs compiled most of these stories and narratives into book form and presented them before the literary world. The tale of 'Anasir' is one of the most interesting of such stories which displays the bravery, their habits, battles and other characteristics of the Bedouin Arabs.

---

29. Zaidan, Tarikh... pp 138, 139 (Al-Mukhtasar)

30. Ahmed Amin Duhal Islam no. 185, 120

Similar is the case with the story of 'Al-Buraq' which is named after a horse called Al-Buraq and was compiled by 'Umar b. Shabba (d. 262 A.H.); the story of 'Bakara Laghlid' which is based on historical facts and was probably compiled by Muhammad Ibn Ishaq; and the story of 'Tha'lab' and 'Alara Anushirvan' which is related in the form of a narrative with some exaggeration. Besides, the Arabs had also produced tales of love in which the authors had shown their extreme love for their beloveds, e.g. (usayr) Labani and Jamil Bushayna. Gradually love stories were composed on a large scale during the 3rd century of Hijra both in prose and poetry, e.g. the verses of 'Umar b. al-Abi Rabi'a, a renowned erotic poet; the story of Ahmad and Bahar; the story of 'Abul 'Alahya and 'Ushab' etc. The celebrated compiler of Al-Fihrist had described many such stories as well as the stories of supernatural beings (Jinn)<sup>31</sup>.

The stories which the Arabs translated from other languages mostly represent the lives of the people from whom they are borrowed. Many of these anecdotes are taken from Persian and Indian sources which display the culture of these peoples. But Greek tales are found only in 'Al-Fihrist' and the rest of them have disappeared. This reduced work was translated from a Persian book named Afsana before the 4th century A.H. It contains some

---

31. Zaidan, Tarikh vol. 139 to 146 (Al-Mukhlasar)

writers themselves tried to compile works of this nature, for example al-Jahshari began to compose a book in which he selected one thousand anecdotes of the Arabs, non Arabs, Romans and others. He divided them into 100 nights and the anecdotes of each night consisted of 50 pages. But unfortunately he died before he could complete one thousand anecdotes.<sup>31</sup>

From a perusal of those facts one can easily conclude the tales and stories were common amongst the Arabs since the ancient times. This practice continued till the age of Al-Hamadhani, who produced his majestic composition of the Maqamat. But the Maqamat are not simple stories; they have certain other characteristics which are dramatic in nature and which suggest that they have dramatic foundation. Indeed, their plot, characters, climax, and new style of writing lead one to draw this inference. Some writers like R.A. Nicholson have opined that there is 'some approach to the dramatic style'.<sup>32</sup> If this view is accepted, the Maqamat of Al-Hamadhani will be counted among the earliest attempts towards the composition of classical dramas in Arabic literature. There is no sign of any other writing similar to the Maqamat before the production of the Maqamat of Badī' al-Zaman of such a unique nature

---

32. Nicholson, Literary history of the Arabs p. 320

having a similar pattern for creating a novel style of composition. However, the Arabs had not composed any work similar to Drama for the purpose of stage where it could achieve appreciation from the audience as was the case with Drama produced by the Europeans which had obtained glory since long. It is suggested by some Orientalists that the *Maqamat* of Badī' al-Zamān and al-Hariri fall in the artistic category of Drama. But this suggestion is refuted by other writers like Jurji Zaidan who affirms that the *Maqamat* are based on philology, oratory, use of unfamiliar words, maxims and proverbs. According to them the object of European Drama is quite different from the object of the aforesaid assemblies. Again, according to Jurji Zaidan some distinguished men of letters have said that the object of assemblies is to advise and reprove, the purpose of which probably is to earn livelihood by means of docile and memory. As far as the Arabian Literature are concerned, they never consider tragedy or comedy as the chief object of the *Maqamat*. That they actually wanted to present through them was to exhibit an elegant style of writing together with philological and lexiconic knowledge. Thus the existence of *Maqamat* of al-Hariri (Rasā'el al-Hariri) cannot be created on the same level as that of the assemblies only on the ground that in them some resemblance is found with these dramatic compositions.<sup>32, 33</sup>

---

33. Zaidan, *Maqamat* pp. 146, 147 (al-Maṭṭa'at)

As a matter of fact, there had been no Maqamat since Jahiliyya till the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty. Truly the word itself was in existence throughout this period along with its various meanings and interpretations in accordance with the changing situation. It is so the eternal glory of the Abbasids that in addition to the development of other branches of literature, the magnificent Assemblies of Badl 'al-Naman al-Hamadani also appeared for the first time before the literary circles of the world and won general appreciation and veneration from all quarters of the literary genre.

Besides, anecdotes and tales of the past which are common features of the Maqamat, Saji' is another important feature which has adorned them greatly. Although there is vast difference between ancient tales on the one hand and the adventures of the Maqamat on the other, yet literally speaking both of them belong to the same class.

As far as the rhymed prose (Saji') in Arabic is concerned, it was seldom found in the days of Jahiliyya and even in the early Islamic period till the last decades of the Umayyad dynasty except in corraons and oraculars of Diviners. In pre-Islam they satisfied themselves with the epic poetry and lyrical ballads. There was thus no question of artistic prose at that time. Even in the reign

---

of the Umayyads, they did not produce any significant composition in rhymed prose such as the *maghamah*. As this was also an Arabian empire, they had no need or ambition to produce any novel form of composition, which might result in a change from the pure, plain and simple characteristic of the Arabic literature into an artificial and majestic mode of writing. The Arabs generally confined themselves to the composition of poetry in the pre-Islamic as well as the early Islamic periods and rhymed prose was practised only by preachers and Diviners. According to Ibn Abbas, the prophet of Islam had never liked *saj'* even in prayers and had prohibited the conventional oracles of diviners. Thus the sermons delivered during the lifetime of the prophet and the Caliphs were free from the artifice of *saj'*. Among the pre-Islamic preachers who employed *saj'* in their lectures like Ibn Ka'ab and Sahbanallah Bahili were two of the most popular and highly admired persons. During the reign of the first four Caliphs the Quranic quotations and traditions of the prophet enhanced the beauty and the effect of these sermons. The well known preacher of this period <sup>was</sup> *Mus'ib Ibn al-Tubaiq*, *Abu Bakr*, the first Caliph of Islam and a few others. Similarly the practice of preaching with zeal and enthusiasm in chaste prose remained in vogue during the Umayyad period also. The famous preacher of this age were

---

Hajjaj Ibn Yousuf, Khalid Ibn al- Walid, al-Mughora, Farid Ibn Zayad and some others.<sup>34, 35</sup> During the Abbasid era when the non Arabs mingled with the Arabs and their respective civilisation came into contact, a new phase of literary development came into being. Then the rhymed prose opened a new chapter in the history of Arabic prose and the glorious Assemblies attained supreme position among the litterateurs of the age.

An eminent writer states in his article about the early Arabian Literature as follows :-  
"The absence of any written Arabic prose literature in pre-Islamic Arabic is even less open to doubt (inspite of occasional arguments to the contrary). Parallel however, to the cultivation of the art of poetry there existed several forms of artistic speech which were distinguished from ordinary speech by the conscious application of aesthetic principles to their selection and polishing.... a brief proverbial phrase... judicial decisions and maxims also were probably forged in the same style.... in oratory, the leading principle in contrast to A'jaz, was elaborate expansion or 'adornment' of the theme, by processes resembling in some respect those employed in poetry, together with the

---

34. Zaidan, Farikh pp. 129 to 131 (al-Mukhlasar)

35. Siddiqi, Ibn al- Hariri p. 94

balancing of phrase with phrase, often emphasized by parallelism in structure, assonance and especially end-rhyme (saj'). A few traces have survived also of elements of folk literature, namely the riddle and the beast fable; on the other hand, the pre-Islamic materials, especially those of the Battle Days are preserved; a third form of artistic speech in pre-Islamic Arabia was the conventional oracular style adopted by the diviners consisting of a series of obscure rhyming oaths).<sup>36</sup> He further adds that during the first century.... the influence of Koran is to be seen in a new style of oratory developed, probably out of the former Khutba pronounced by the Caliphs and their Governors in which more emphasis was laid on the contents and less on external adornments, 'saj' in particular being avoided. It was in all probability this style which furnished the models for the first literary use of Arabic written prose as the hands of the Kuttab, the secretaries of the Umayyad Caliphs and Governors.<sup>36</sup> During the second century the first ~~660~~ in Arabic prose were presented by the Kuttab, the chancery secretaries of the Umayyads, on the occasion of official Thutaba (addresses). It is on the privilege of 'Abd al-Rahid Ibn Yahya (d. 132 A.H.) that the earliest known literary production came into existence which was based on a particular style unknown to his predecessors, and this ingenious experiment excited the later secretaries (Kuttab)

---

36. Encyclopaedia of Islam (Vol 1) p. 10 1957



to adopt this method for further developments in this regard, the flexibility in prose style, as in other literature, was firstly achieved by the process of translation. It was initiated by the distinguished translators and disciples of Abd'al-Rahmān namely, Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 139 A.H.) who began from the Sasanid court literature of Sasanid Persia and translated his famous book, Kalilah and Dimna from antique Persian literature into Arabic prose. Thus according to the above writer he created 'a smooth and palatable prose style which was capable of expressing systematic thoughts, within the limits of available vocabulary'.<sup>36</sup> Truly, the function of the this literature was didactic and ceremonial that comprised under the heading of Adab. This enduring style of composition and diverse content procured a wide popularity in the midst of the new urban society. The translations and imitations of Persian literature occupied a dominant place in Arabic literature for many next years.

At the same time, native forms of Arabic prose were getting popular among the literatures and were developed. For instance, the primitive narrative arts, e.g. episodes or anecdotes (Kasas) Khabar or narration, especially the romances of Riddin lovers and of battle days were produced in conscious literary style.

---

According to the aforesaid writer 'in contrast to the literary genres, which presented in a greater or less degree their original Arabian structure the rapid expansion of intellectual energy in Basra and Kufa, especially in the schools of philology and law, was creating with the chehlp of Greek logic, a new argumentative prose which was far more flexible and closer knit than either the new narrative forms or the translations of the 'secretaries'.<sup>36</sup>

Later from the 3rd to the 5th century A.H. the Arabic prose literature acquired predominance in the hands of the leading writers of the time. The towering personality of Al-Jahiz (d. 255 A.H.) illuminated various branches of literature in the 3rd century. He depicted all aspects of contemporary life in a series of essays, composed in a chaste and witty style, marked in linguistic vigour and variety. Another notable writer of the century was Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 A.H.), who in a long series of works furnished the secretaries with commentaries and extracts from all branches of Arabic literature. He further incorporated in them elements of the Persian historical and courtly traditions which could be harmonised with their Arabian Islamic counterparts. Henceforward, Adab, in its strict sense was confined to the treatises and other literary works based upon Arabian Islamic traditions in which the Persian and Hellenistic

---

commentaries were included. The Hellenistic traditions were absorbed in Arabic literature through several translations from Greek works in the 3rd century, e.g. those made by Qustab Luqa (d. 220 A.H.) and Hunain b. Ishaq (d. 260 A.H.).<sup>37,5</sup>

After Ibn al-Utaybi, the horizon of Arabic letters widened to include disciplines such as dramas, poetry, history, politics, rhetoric, anecdotes and anecdotages, few other new branches of literature which developed during this period were the 'sessions' (Majalis) and 'Dictations' (Amali) of al-Rubarrad (d. 235 A.H.); al-Ha'lib (d. 291 A.H.); Ibn Duraid (d. 321 A.H.); and Abu Faris (d. 395 A.H.). In Kitab al-Munawwaran Abu Hilal al-Aaskari (d. 395 A.H.) offered a critical analysis of prose and poetry of his age. But "the significant feature of most of this discussion was the insistence upon form rather than matters as the decisive criterion of quality and the only difference between one poet and another lay in his manner of expression".<sup>39</sup> Gradually the technique of secretarial correspondence was made an art (Isha) that was based upon highly admired models of elegant and refined writing. Till that time the use of rhymed prose was practised only for occasional ornaments but then it became incumbent for official records. By the middle of the 4th

---

37. Ma'idan, Tarikh... pp. 149-153 (al-Mukhlashar)

38. Ahmed Amin, Duhal Islam n. 296

39. Encyclopaedia of Islam (Vol 1) Fasc 10 n. 586-87.

century A.H., an eminent Vizier, Ibn al-'Amid (d. 359 A.H.) composed an excellent correspondence in 'saj'. He was well known for his unique model of correspondence and was called a man of letters (al-'adib). For his glory and command on writing he was entitled as second Jahsh. It is further stated that the majestic compositions began with Abd al-Hamid and ended on Ibn al-'Amid. After that the use of 'saj' became a mania with the disciples and successor to Ibn al-'Amid, named Ibn al-'Abbad (d. 385 A.H.), who was known as 'al-sabab'. Among the contemporary literatures the most celebrated were al-Thumari (d. 383 A.H.) and al-Qasbi known by the sobriquet of Badi al-Zaman (the Wonder of Time) who existed in the year 398 A.H. They employed the new style in their articles (Rasa'il) in such a manner that they resembled unscanned verse more than prose.<sup>40, 41</sup> Even great compilers such as al-Jahiz, Abu Ishaq and al-Nawwari (d. 455 A.H.) followed their example. The cult of rhymed prose attracted one of the most outstanding figures of his time like Abulata al-Tha'ir (d. 449 A.H.) by regarding artificiality as a means of earning 'rabia' writers still further away from the solid ground of real life and living issues and to set a rivalry of Arabic

---

40. Sa'adan, 'Arikh... pp. 166, 169, 169 (al-Thumari)  
41. Haroon, 'Abbad, Badi al-Zaman pp. 40, 41

literature,"<sup>12</sup>

In the words of the writer in the Encyclopedia of Islam "for the moment, however, the revival of Saji coincided with a search for new or original methods of presenting literary themes. Badi' al-Zaman found a new setting (or revived a Hellenistic genre) in the popular theme of the witty vegetable and created the dramatic anecdote or *maqama*"<sup>12</sup> However, the assemblies of Al-Namadhari appeared to have found few imitators until the end of the 5th century"<sup>12</sup> the great *maqama* writer, Al-Hariri of Basra (d. 516 A.D.) revived them with the same motifs as that of his predecessor Al-Namadhari"<sup>12</sup> But, the increased refinement of which and philological facility challenging the most artful of the epistles along with remarkable poetic attributes.

Thus the art of writing took a new turn which opened new vistas for the future generation. This style of composition was called 'classical' which became mature in the 3rd Abbasid century. As the life of the rich in this age was too luxurious and full of comforts with varieties in dress, diet and other other modes of life, the writers who were impressed by them, presented their literary efforts in different majestic and glorious forms. By and by, Saji became inevitable for correspondence, especially for the classical style. In this period the magnificence of composition depended mainly on

adornment and decoration of the text. Many other figures  
12. Encyclopedia of Islam (Vol II) pp 10 & 507.

of speech such as 'Jenab' and 'Badi' were invented for this purpose. The rulers as well as the subjects of the Abbasid age were fond of this kind of literature.<sup>43, 44</sup> Hence the writers showed great command on 'Saj' and other decorative styles. But from the beginning of the 4th Abbasid century the writers did not confine themselves to 'Saj' and resemblance (Jenab) etc. to the same extent as their predecessors did. They not only excelled in it but transgressed its limits. The result was that extreme exaggerations marred the beauties of composition as unfamiliar and obsolete words were used by these writers. They concentrated their full attention on the words which they used with the object of adorning the text and cared little for the meaning of the theme on which the whole work or text actually depended. The compiler of 'Al-I'tisafat al-Adbia' states that 'Saj' and 'Badi' had dominated the Arabic prose before the middle of the 4th century A.H.<sup>45</sup> Rapidly this practice spread among the literatures of the age and several outstanding secretaries and men of letters such as Ibn al-Farabi achieved prominence in the art of chaste and elegant composition. According to the compilers of 'Adbia al-

---

43. Zaidan, Tarikh pp. 152 to 155 (al-Makhsar)

44. Sayf, Al-Maqama p. 32

45. Al-Maddisi, Al-I'tisafat... p. 155

'Luġat al-ʿArabiyya' the scope of Arabic prose largely developed during the Abbasid reign, when all kinds of religious, literary and other subjects were collected, compiled and translated from various languages. Many words were introduced for the first time in accordance with the requirement of various studies and writings.<sup>46</sup> But in all these collections and compilations there was no complication of language. Whenever they compiled a book, it was done in its natural form together with the simplicity of style and gracefulness of composition. This simple and plain style of writing which was devoid of ambiguity, remained in vogue almost upto the 4th century of Hijra. The adornment and decoration of prose and poetry was subordinate to other features which were found in former centuries. Afterwards, literary life weakened because of growing informality in the Abbasid Caliphate. A large number of recreators ('Muallifin') adopted 'Saj' in their writings and instead of its decoration of form in Arabic prose and poetry increased abundantly. Many of them ignored the substance and began to play only on words. Hence several works were composed in 'Saj' e.g. 'Sikhat al-ʿAyan' and 'Al-Fushul al-ʿArabiyya'.<sup>46</sup> Again the compilers of 'Al-Fihrist' and certain other writers have unanimously declared that 'Saj' and 'Badi' were mostly popular in the last decades of the Abbasid rule. Those

---

46. Atif Beg, Adab al-ʿArab... p. 35

artistic features became so common that all anecdotes and works were composed on this ingenious pattern. Different types of Badi were invented and Ruzbihan and others showed their outstanding merit in excellent productions utilising them.<sup>17</sup>

All these historical facts clearly lead to the conclusion that anecdotes composed in Badi were existing among the Arabs since the ancient times. Though their popularity grew rapidly in the Abbasid region and especially in the 12th century A.H. yet their origin goes back, in one form or the other to the antique past. In fact, the Arabs had no drama in the classical period. Instead of it, they developed a form known as 'Maqamat' which was known to be rich in dramatic content. This was a very popular literary form during the Abbasid period. The 'Maqamat' reflect their life, characteristics and various lexicons through episodes in rhymed prose. Truly, 'Al-Hariri's Maqamat, like those of Al-Ma'arri, are firmly rooted in the common life of the Islamic city and portray its manners and its humours so realistically as to constitute one of the most precious social documents of the Islamic middle ages.<sup>18</sup>

So far as the opinion of a majority of the writers is concerned, it is unanimous on this point that

---

17. Askandari & Inani, Al-Nahj no. 183-193, 200

18. Encyclopaedia of Islam (Vol 7) pp 10 & 337



ʿAdīʾ al-Zaman al-Hamadani (d. 390 A.H.) was the originator of the Maqamat. The only dissenting voice is that of Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ali al-Husri al-Airani, who died in the year 453 A.H. According to him the credit of making wonderful stories goes to Ibn Duraid (d. 324 A.H.).<sup>19</sup> His statement of al-Husri opened the way for criticism and difference of opinion amongst the literary circles of the Arab world. The latter commentators assailed the authenticity and soundness of his judgment and they reached different conclusions. However, it is an unchallengeable fact that no composition such as Maqamat existed in Arabic prose literature before the appearance of the Maqamat of al-Hamadani. Hence he is called the creator of this unique form of composition. About al-Hamadani's borrowing from the accounts of Ibn Duraid, Brockelmann states as follows: 'How far al-Husri's statement quoted above, S.V. Hamadani, that al-Hamadani got the idea from Ibn Duraid's Maqabat is true cannot be ascertained as this work has not survived. In any case he is entitled to the credit of having created a new literary form, which might have proved very fertile in Arabic literature which is not exactly rich in forms. It is perhaps impossible to appreciate his talent fully if we may believe the tradition

---

<sup>19</sup> al-Husri, *Maqat al-Fann* p. 273

that the 51 specimens that have survived so far and which were apparently all that were known to Al-Hariri, represent only about an eighth of his whole output"<sup>50</sup>

The compilers of 'Al-Maqamat' and 'Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani observe that there seems to be a link between discourses of Al-Hamadani which he had dictated to his students and the accounts of Ibn Duraid that caused Al-Hamadani to compile his *Maqamat*.<sup>51, 52</sup>

It has already been indicated that the word 'Maqamat' means Hadith, i.e., accounts. Hence there seems to be some link between the two areas. In Al-Mamali' of Abu Ali al-Gali, the 40 accounts of Ibn Duraid are included. But they do not relate mendacity (Kadib) as it is found in the *Maqamat* of al-Hamadani. Despite this fact, the relation between the two designs is quite apparent, because Ibn Duraid <sup>present</sup> his accounts in the form of a narration (Bayan) and authority (Sanad) and most probably these accounts are in *raji'* and consist of unfamiliar words. They are compiled with the object of teaching lexicon in the same manner as *Maqamat* al-Hamadani do, though the latter are easier to understand and more elegant in form than the former.

---

50. Brockelmann, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* p. 101

51. Dayf, *Al-Maqamat* pp. 16, 17

52. Maroon Abbud, *Badi' al-Zaman* pp. 34, 35

Al-Husri has clearly remarked that Badi' al-Zaman had composed 400 Maqamat and formerly Al-Ba'libi had mentioned the same number in his famous book, 'Amali'. Again, some epistles of Al-Hamadani have pointed out the very number of his 'Maqamat'. But it is most probable that the copies of these epistles might have committed a mistake in this regard as is evident from the fact that in a contest between Ibn Duraid and Badi' al-Zaman the former had only 40 accounts of his command and hence the latter also required the same number. It is also a fact that Al-Hamadani had composed only 40 Maqamat as Nishapur and later he intended to add a few more. Consequently he composed six Maqamat in praise of a ruler named 'Alf b. Ahmad, and five others. Thus, their total became 51.<sup>53</sup> However, it appears that Al-Hamadani wrote his 'Maqamat' on the same lines as the accounts of Ibn Duraid. A review of 'Amali' and the 'Maqamat' would show it clear that there is complete and apparent similarity between the two works. The 'Maqamat al-'Adha' describing the qualities of a lion and 'Maqamat al-Hamadani' relating the virtues of a horse exhibit the very details as depicted in 'Amali'. Besides, there are many sayings and proverbs in the 'Maqamat' which have resemblance with those in 'Amali'. A good deal of maxims, simile and also sayings

---

53. Maroon Abbud, Badi' al-Zaman pp. 12, 13, 14, 15 to 17.

found in the Assemblies such as 'al-Mas'ud' and 'al-Mas'ud' clearly resemble with the accounts of Ibn Duraid. Further, the central idea is, mendacity or cleverness around which the Maqamat are constructed, is similar to the sermon of an Arabi beggar, delivered in the Mosque of Al-Haram, as narrated by the author of 'Maqamat' on behalf of Ibn Duraid. From all these instances it appears that Badi' al-Zaman was influenced in his composition of the Maqamat by the accounts of Ibn Duraid and he cannot be said to have a literary contest with the latter.<sup>54</sup>

According to the compiler 'al-Mas'ud',<sup>54</sup> it was not Ibn Duraid alone who incited 'al-Mas'ud' to compile his Maqamat, but the leading works of 'al-Jahiz, in which he had described mendacity in detail, had also influenced him much. In 'al-Mas'ud' of 'al-Mas'ud', the accounts of the beggar are preserved. There is no evidence to prove how Badi' al-Zaman had learnt the art of 'al-Jahiz except the similarity of the themes, i.e. Kufia or mendacity, which caused the former to compile many of his Maqamat dealing with begging and cheating. Of course, the chapter relating 'al-Jahiz begins with a controversy between an old man who belonged to mendicant class and a young man who had recently joined this vocation. When the old man asked him about his vocation, the said youth condemned mendicancy and its practice. This made the former angry and he decided

---

<sup>54</sup> Mas'ud, Al-Mas'ud p. 18

to take revenge against the practice of mendacity. But later he began to relate its virtues and declared that a mendicant or beggar always lived in comfort. He then praised this vocation and said:-

”فهو على بره الدنيا ومساحة الأرض، وخليفة ذي التورين الذي بلغ المشرق والمغرب منها قل  
للخفاف البؤس، يسير حيث يشاء يأخذ أطايب كل بلدة“.

55

He further added:

”فهو رخي الحال، حسن البخل، لا نختم للأصل ولا مال، ولا دار ولا عقار“.

55

Again, the old man related to the youth his visit to a hilly place where he stayed in a great mosque and was dressed in a particular fashion: there he addressed the local inhabitants and consequently amassed much wealth. Hearing this, the youth jumped with joy and kissed his forehead.

The aforesaid account reveals some plans of the mendicant through <sup>which</sup> they acquired wealth and property. It also describes some of their peculiar habits and practices. A perusal of this account proves that the "maqamat al-Hamadani were really influenced by the episodes of al-Jahiz.

In the light of the above facts one may conjecture that Badi' al-Zaman obtained the knowledge of mendicants and their affairs from al-Jahiz just as he learned from the accounts of Ibn Duraid as related in 'Amali'. If on the one hand Ibn Duraid guided him in the art of story

selling for academic purposes, on the other hand Al-Jahiz inspired him to adopt the theme of begging and mendacity. Thus it seems that al-Hamadhani was aware of both these trends and benefited from them. No doubt, the first object is more obvious in his Maqamat than the second. But it is still a fact that his adoption of the subject matter of Al-Jahiz is no less significant than that of his predecessor and is in rather more significant as in the age of al-Hamadhani there was actually a class of people known as mendicants (Ashab al-udhi). They were also called 'saganiyat' referring to fessan. A detailed account of this group and its activities as well as the poets who belonged to this class, such as Abu Dulaf and Ahmad al-Mubari, is given in the next chapter.

The Maqamat of al-Hamadhani and al-Turri al-Ayyi are written in a form of narrative (Rawya). It is another evidence of the fact that when al-Hamadhani intended to compile his Maqamat, he had already decided to imitate Ibn Duraid. According to al-Turri, Ibn Duraid always begins his accounts with some authority or reference. ~~None~~ All of them are fictitious and imaginary. Actually there exists neither a narration nor a narrator; the accounts are based rather on fiction and fancy. Perhaps, Tadh' al-Hamadani imitated him in this respect but he did not base his account on false references of philology and history. Indeed, the authority which he has referred to in his

---

statements, have a particular basis which to himself had  
invented and developed.

It should also be remembered that there is a  
circumstance which draws one's attention towards a relevant point  
concerning Jahiz and the attacks of boggars which, as has  
already been said, was developed by Haradani in his  
Magamat. Al-Haradani has named one of his Magamat after al-  
Jahiz in which he has found fault with him. It seems that  
he had studied the works of al-Jahiz and wanted to surpass  
him, thus it is most probable that he had learnt the art  
of al-Jahiz by studying his writing and the 'attacks' of  
boggars seem to have paved the way for literary contro-  
versy.<sup>56</sup> The criticism of al-Haradani that al-Jahiz  
had used only simple and unfamiliar words appears to be  
superfluous because it is a quality rather than a defect,  
as the early writers have held. Even if we agree with al-  
Haradani's point of view, then the same charge may be  
levelled against al-Haradani himself. He reasons for  
levelling such charges say to show that he wanted to over-  
shadow the personality of al-Jahiz by finding basic defects  
in his writing and in this way secure eminence for  
himself. Thus he could also conceal the source of his  
knowledge of the subject. Had al-Jahiz benefited from the  
writing of Badi' al-Zaman, perhaps he also could have done  
the same thing.<sup>55</sup>

---

56. Brockelmann, Encyclopaedia of Islam II, 161-162.

A learned commentator of the *Awana* in century  
*Yahya* *Libaraki*, has expressed his opinion about the originator  
of the *Maqamat* in the following words :-

”موسى هذا الكلام أن يداح الزمان ليس مبتكر في فن المقامات، وإنما حاكى ابن صيد في أحاديثه،  
وقد استعملت هذه النص في كتابي الذي وضعته بالفرنسية عن النثر في القرن الرابع: وقد وصف  
المسودات هذه الفكرة، وعجب كيف اتفق الناس إلى اليوم على أن البدخ هو طمس  
فن المقامات، ولكن من جانب آخر أذكر أني لم أرى مثل هذا الكلام في غير *أدب*، ولا أنزال  
أتمسك به مصدر آخر، ولم أعتبر على شيء إلى اليوم، فيزيه في الدعوى أن صاحب  
*نزهة الأدب* يروي المسألة على أنها مقولة خروفا لم يمس بنقش ولا تكذيب، وقد نظرها غيره  
في حجم الأدب“ 57

*Ibn Basam* has also praised *Al-Husri's* genius and  
wisdom and no writer has ever charged him of making wrong  
statements. In view of the fact that various writers have  
affirmed *Al-Husri's* authenticity regarding the material  
which he has produced in '*Tahr al-'Adab*', it is not  
advisable to discard his conclusions about *Yahya* *al-'Awwan*  
without sufficient proof against him. Hence it is necessary  
to analyse this issue carefully so that the question of  
originator of *Maqamat* could be judged and decided in the  
light of historical facts.<sup>58</sup>

As far as the opinion of scholars are concerned, a  
majority of them are of the view that *Yahya* *al-'Awwan* is

57. *Al-Husri*, *Tahr al-'Adab* pp 273, 274

58. *Ghanawi*, *Al-'Adab*... v. 224



the inventor of the art of Maqamat writing. Even the most celebrated Maqamat writer of the 5th century A.H., named al-Hariri has expressed the same opinion in the preface of his Maqamat. The solitary opinion against the general view is that of al-Husri who has related that Ibn Duraid's 40 discourses were the main source for Sadi al-Hariri to compile his Assemblies.<sup>59</sup> According to this statement of al-Husri it becomes doubtful that Sadi al-Hariri was the inventor of the Maqamat, rather it seems more probable that the credit for it goes to Ibn Duraid. But in our opinion this is not the whole truth. Firstly one has to find out specifically in what respect al-Hariri was influenced by the accounts of Ibn Duraid and secondly one should be pointed out what sort of affinity existed between them in the domain of art. Whether it is particular style, ideas and fancies and theme or the whole structure of work on the basis of which it is claimed that Sadi al-Hariri had imitated Ibn Duraid. Al-Husri is silent on this point, but the facts narrated by him themselves narrate the truth. He has remarked that Ibn Duraid's accounts are full of many rare and unknown events and narration which are not fascinating to the people. As opposed to it, the Maqamat of Sadi al-Hariri have achieved popularity and recognition among the literary circles. The simple reason of their popularity is that he has related familiar and well known episodes and occurrences of the day, the condition of mendicants (Fakhr) and their affairs as

---

59. Al-Husri, *Maqamat al-Hariri* p. 273

well as their strange and unique color and amusing  
accounts were fully known to the people and they had an  
intimate knowledge of this class of baggards and their  
daily adventures, through elegant and refined passages in  
which words appear like pearls, he has created a wide  
interest and appeal for the Maqamat. His style is so  
forceful and unique that it gives a clear idea of a  
dramatic composition when two persons appear on the stage,  
one of them wearing the garment of a narrator (Na'iq) and  
the other playing the valiant role of a hero (Dall). In  
this manner, all the Maqamat display novel and excellent  
themes and also amazing charms of lexicon and philology.  
These evidences prove conclusively that an unity of art  
(Ishraq-i-Fanni) exists between the Maqamat and the  
accounts of Ibn Duraid and they are not co-related. If  
this argument is accepted, then one has to hold that al-  
Hurri does not mean by his ascription that the accounts of  
Ibn Duraid are similar to the Maqamat of al-Bamadhani. His  
is also the opinion of distinguished authors like al-  
Maqqisi. As I have earlier stated the reputed commentator,  
Saki 'Abd al-Rahman has opined that Ibn Duraid's discourses  
provided the basis for the artistic composition of Maqamat  
al-Bamadhani, but this view has been discarded by al-  
Maqqisi and a few other eminent authors. In these  
circumstances it shall become appropriate to suggest that  
Ibn Duraid's accounts are only a source for ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Maqamat  
al-Bamadhani to compile his assemblies. Perhaps al-Hurri too

---

means the same thing by his ascriptions in 'Tahr al-'<sup>60</sup>

In addition to the arguments already put forward it is noteworthy that Yaqut al-Hamawi, the well known compiler of 'Mu'jam al-Udaba', has told that in the work of al-Hugri (cited above) the word 'Marad' (i.e. confessed) refers to Ibn Duraid himself and not the accounts depicted by him in 'Tahr al-'<sup>60</sup>. It may also be suggested that Badi' al-Zaman and his predecessors Ibn Duraid have presented their artistic compositions in their own way and they did not have any idea to hold a literary contest between themselves. In other words, it may be said that al-Hugri has only opined that Badi' al-Zaman has exhibited originality and refinement in his 'Maqamat' just as Ibn Duraid has shown his singular art in his unique and amazing accounts. The both of them are similar in the matter of literary compositions and are dissimilar in other respects, for they have adopted their own distinct style. The origin of the stories goes back to the ancient times. They have been narrated by early writers as well as by many contemporaries of al-Hamadani. Hence it is meaningless to suggest that the latter was only inspired by the accounts of Ibn Duraid. Such a view is mistaken and contrary to facts. Besides, not a single contemporary of Badi' al-Zaman accused him

---

60. Ganavi, Al-Arab... pp. 15, 224 to 226

of imitating the accounts of Ibn Duraid or any other writer. Even his greatest opponent and literary antagonist Abu Bakr al-Harithi (d. 313 A.H.), whom Dabbi' al-Tamam had defeated in a literary competition at Nishapur, did not charge him with derivation of stories from other writers, on the other hand, he was rather surprised by the exclusive workmanship of Dabbi' al-Tamam. If he had been capable of composing an 'asabi' like al-Harithi he would have certainly produced it on the latter's demand. He also in some criticism of al-Harithi the demand of producing similar assemblages were no doubt a challenge to the genius of al-Harithi, who was an outstanding literary figure of his time. Their differences were not confined to the literary field; they followed even different faiths; while al-Harithi was a Sunni, al-Harithi believed in Shi'ism. Thus in both respects literary as well as religious they were opposed to each other. In such circumstances al-Harithi could not have left any stone unturned to defeat and humiliate his rival, so that his incredulity and to propagate his literary shams or inspiration from the accounts of Ibn Duraid. He must have exposed in his works the false means adopted by al-Harithi and he must have been the first man to challenge the originality of the

---

Maqamat declaring that Ibn Duraid was their actual originator and al-Hamadani was only his disciple and follower. But the pages of literary history of the Arabs include nothing of this nature, this is one of the most convincing arguments in support of the general view that 'Adi' al-Haman was the real inventor of Maqamat composition.  
61-64

Now it remains to determine why some critics are accepting al-Husri's view and what are the facts behind it. To ascertain it, it is necessary to go through the texts of Mu'jam al-Udaba and Tahr al-Adab concerning al-Hamadani and the origin of Maqamat. From a textual of their contents it becomes evident that either the copies of Tahr al-Adab have depended on incorrect sources or the actual text has been altered by them intentionally or unintentionally. Most probably they have done so without any notice and only by way of negligence on their part. This is the main cause of differences found in the texts of Mu'jam al-Udaba and Tahr al-Adab at some places. For instance in Tahr al-Adab of al-Husri, it is related thus :

- 
- 61. Al-Husri, Al-Adab (Tahr-al-Adab) p. 273
  - 62. Yaqut, Mu'jam al-Udaba pp. 161-169
  - 63. 'Araf, al-Maqamat p. 15
  - 64. Ahmed Amin, 'Uhar-al-Islam p. 397

T1268

قال الحصري في زهر الادب: -  
 "ولما رأى أبو بكر محمد بن الحسين بن دريد اللزدي أغرب بأربعين حديثاً، وذكر أن  
 استنبطها من نباح صدره، واستنبطها من معادن فكره، وأبدى أفعالاً بصيرة  
 والبصائر، وأصدر أفعالاً لفكاره والضمائر، في معارض أنعمت والفاظ حوشية...  
 أعرضها بأربعائة مقام في اللزدي... الخ"

65

Instead of it in Mu'jam al-Udaba of Yaqut al-Rumi, it  
 runs as :-

قال ياقوت الرومي في معجم الادباء: -  
 "في معارض حوشية، والفاظ عجيبة... عارضها بأربعائة مقام في اللزدي... الخ"

66-68

There is no doubt that the text of Mu'jam al-Udaba is more  
 accurate and reliable even though it is derived from Ibr  
 al-Udab. Perhaps the copyists have changed the original  
 text and have put certain <sup>words</sup> in places where they were not  
 originally used, e.g. 'Ajma' occurs as a place where it  
 should not have occurred.

According to H. Chanaw<sup>66</sup> all the contemporary  
 authors were misled by the errors committed by the copyists

65. Al-Husri, Mu'jam al-Udab p. 273

66. Chanawi, Al-Udab. .... p. 228

67. Yaqut, Mu'jam al-Udaba no. 169, 170

68. Tayf, al-Maqama p. 17

of *Tahr al-Arab* and accepted them genuine. This is why they have said that ' *في معاني العجمية* ' refers to the accounts of Ibn Duraid and stands for them. These authors have further remarked that Ibn Duraid had invented a new literary style which he derived from Persian life so that he could produce through it his literary output, although in reality this literary form had nothing to do with the Persian life.<sup>66</sup> Likewise some other literary figures have observed that ' *عارفها بارجاء قفا* ' creates the impression that Ibn Duraid was the originator of new form of composition and his discourses were founded on sound principles, which *Adi' al-Tamam* has adopted in his Assemblies and had exhibited his wonderful talents while doing so. But all these scholars have expressed their opinion without any evidence. They have simply relied upon possibilities and probabilities. One of the eminent writers, *Al-Kadisi*, after supposing unlay in the artistic pattern of the two works i.e. Accounts of Ibn Duraid and *Maqasat Adi' al-Tamam* has concluded as follows :- 'If one reads the accounts of Ibn Duraid as reproduced in *'Amali'* of *Ali Qali*, he will find coincidences or narratives which are related in *Maqasat* together with an inclination for rhythmic prose (saj')<sup>67</sup> But this conclusion is surprising and unreasonable, because anecdotes and rhythmic prose are the common features which are available

---

69. *Gharbi al-Arab*.... p. 228.

in all ancient and later tales. During the 4th century of Islam Saḡī' and fīnī stories were popular among the literary circles of the Arab world. In such circumstances it will be incorrect to say that Badi' al-Zaman was influenced by Ibn Duraid or the former was under the influence of popular literary style of his age. No doubt, he was greatly distressed by the prevalent unsatisfactory conditions of the people who were suffering from poverty, need, disappointments and depression. His condition of the masses had compelled them to earn their living through deception and mendacity. They had adopted various ways of begging which were akin to those of the Sasanids (Sana Sasan). They used to appear in various guises such as that of a saint (carrier), or a poet for this purpose. I shall give a detailed account of the Sasanids and their activities in the next chapter.<sup>69</sup>

As described by Brockelmann 'in the 3rd century A.H. the word Maqamat became the name for a beggar's appeal, which had to be framed in carefully chosen language.... The appeals of beggars seem to have paved the way for the literary genre proper.'<sup>70</sup> Badi' al-Zaman has produced a typical representation of this literary phenomenon to which he himself belonged.<sup>70</sup> The practice of mendacity and the life of mendicancy are reflected in his excellent Assemblies. He has depicted in a remarkable style the

---

70. Brockelmann, Encyclopaedia of Islam II, 161-164.



current affairs as well as the literary taste of the people of his age together with *raji'* and other niceties of language, e.g. maxims, verses, proverbs etc. It is further suggested that the 'raqa' is a kind of Sa'ala literature which was developed in the high society A.H. and Badi' al-Zaman, with his masterpiece style, ornamental language and treatment of familiar subjects, has shown an unparalleled distinction in the history of Arabic literature. According to Mahmud al-Ghazali the word 'Sa'ala' was used for the Sassanids (Banu Sasan) who used to make their living by various means and in various guises and after them Badi' al-Zaman also named a 'raqa' called 'Al-Sassani'. Their special dialect is known as 'Lughat Banu Sasan'. Some other contemporaries of Al-Hamadhani, such as al-Fahd b. 'Abbad, also knew their lexicon. Certain Sassanid poets, such as Abu Dulaf and Ahmad al-'Ukbari, have used Sa'ala words in their verses.<sup>71</sup> Al-Jahiz has mentioned the Sassanid poets and has described their character, religion, habits, manners etc.<sup>72</sup> Thus there is a similarity between the poetry of the Sassanid poets and the 'raqa' of Badi' al-Zaman. A glance at the Sassanid 'raqa' of Abu Dulaf and 'Dalia' of Ahmad discloses the resemblance between the 'raqa' and the aforesaid Sassanid. On account of this resemblance it is presumed that Sa'ala literature

---

71. Ghazali, Al-Adab.... pp. 212, 214, 215, 255.

72. Al-Jahiz, Yacima pp. 116 to 287 (Vol. I) pp. 171 to 185 (Vol. III)

was the source of these writings and all these writers had depicted the life of the Sasanids i.e. Sa'aleek, who wandered from place to place in order to earn their livelihood. But the unique dramatic pattern of the Maqamat and the prevalent state of affairs related in them bestowed on them a glorious and majestic place in the world of Arabic literature.<sup>73</sup>

However, the theme of Sa'aleek literature is nothing but begging and mendacity and they were the common features of the time when Badi' al-Zaman began to compose his Assemblies. Undoubtedly, begging (Istawaal) was practised since ancient times just as poverty and wealth were co-existing since then. According to M. Ghannawi, al-Bayhaqi has stated that once the poet al-Buaya was asked to advise beggars to give up their vocation but he refused to do so saying that it was a business without loss. Later on, Jahiz mentioned in his works mendicancy and their false practices which were widely spread in their lifetime, mainly under the Buyyids, the people were afraid of their shrewd and deceitful acts. Another celebrated writer, al-Hakimi, has stated in 'Ahsan al-Iqtasaam' that no sermon was heard in Shiraz without soliciting alms. Gradually, this practice became popular and well established. Badi' al-Zaman in his epistle addressed to a certain Kasi wrote that he belonged to : 'Ashab al-Jarad' which means 'Ashab al-Istawaal' (the mendicants).<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Maroon Abbud, Badi' al-Zaman pp. 34 to 37

<sup>74</sup> Ghannawi al-Adab... p. 209

Some writers have also stated that Badi' al-Zaman was a disciple of Ibn Faris (d. 390 or 395 A.H.) and had learnt all the disciplines from him. This is a vague statement on which no one can place his reliance, because only acquiring knowledge from Ibn Faris does not give an inference that al-Hamadani had learnt *fiqh* (jurisprudence) from him. Indeed Ibn Faris was a learned man of his time, especially in lexicon, although he had command over other branches of literature too. He had compiled many works such as *al-Mu'jam* and had composed a large number of epistles and verses.<sup>75</sup> According to Yaqut it is stated in 'Anba' al-Ru'as' that Ibn Faris was a leading scholar of his time, who wrote several remarkable books. Another eminent author, Abu Al-Hasan al-Dakharidi, has called his works as the best production of that period.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, Ibn Khallikan has pointed out that Ibn Faris was the leading *faqih* in various branches of knowledge, especially in *lugha* (lexicon). It is further stated that Badi' al-Zaman used to transmit narrations from him as well as from others.<sup>77</sup> So far as the vast knowledge and learning of Ibn Faris is concerned, there is no doubt about it. But merely one sample and ambiguous statement relating that al-Hamadani was a disciple of Ibn Faris and used to transmit narrations from

75. Maroon Abbud, Badi' al-Zaman pp. 26, 31, 42

76. Yaqut, Mu'jam al-Udaba pp. 161 Vol. I p. 80 Vol. IV

77. Ibn Khallikan, Tarayac... pp. 100, 109

him, does not lead to the conclusion that Ibn Faris was the inventor of Maqamat writing. In the absence of any concrete evidence regarding this and considering the fact that there is no extant Maqamat by Ibn Faris or any other writer prior to Al-Hamadhani it will not be justified to pass a judgment only on the basis of suspicion or conjecture. Hence, the suggestion that al-Hamadhani derived inspiration from Ibn Faris, particularly regarding the exquisite workmanship of Maqamat, has no justification at all.

According to Jurji Zaidan 'Maqamat are the earliest writings known by this name and are also the foremost book in the art of dictionary making in a peculiar style. Badi' al-Zaman has fulfilled its all requisites and made it a knowledge itself.' He further adds that Al-Hamadhani had derived this typical mode of composition from his learned teacher Ibn Faris al-Jughfi.<sup>78</sup> In producing the first major dictionary of classical language Ibn Faris is celebrated among other writers such as al-Jabbari, al-Halbi and Ibn Duraid. His authority in lexicon is accepted by the Arabic scholars and there is no dispute over it. But the view that Al-Hamadhani had learnt the wonderful art of Maqamat writing from Ibn Faris is a far-fetched idea. No doubt, Badi' al-Zaman had acquired vast knowledge from Ibn Faris and 'Isa b. Hisham al-Ikhbari.<sup>79</sup> But there is no

---

78. Zaidan, *Farikh* p. 170 (al-Mukhtasar)

79. Umar, Farrukh, *Al-Rasa'il...* p. 25

concrete evidence that he had also borrowed something from the works of his teachers or others. The literary history of the *Al-Bihar* is unable to cite a single example of the works of Ibn Faris similar to the *Maqamat*. Hence, to hold the view that because Al-Hamadhani was a disciple of Ibn Faris and had acquired knowledge from him, he must have been influenced by him in *Maqamat* writing seems to be rather absurd.

From the above arguments one concludes that the glorious and decorative *Maqamat* *Sadi' al-Zaman* was the earliest composition of its kind in the history of Arabic literature. No writer irrespective of the fact whether he is of major<sup>or</sup> minor whatsoever has ever claimed to be the originator of the *Maqamat*. The latter attempt to make *Sadi' al-Zaman* an imitator of Ibn Furaid or Ibn Faris is nothing but denial of the facts that have already been proved and admitted by the literary Arab world.

It has already been stated that if there was slightest doubt about *Sadi' al-Zaman* being the originator of the *Maqamat*, his greatest literary companion Al-Kharrizmi, would not have desisted from criticising him on this point. The absence of any such criticism or comments by him must be taken as a definite proof of *Sadi' al-Zaman* being the

---

original Assemblies writer, hence no charge of theft or derivation from literary writings of earlier authors can be levelled against him.

In his 17th Assembly named 'of Hajr', al-Hariri admitted Badi' al-Zaman's priority but at the same time asserted his own superiority to him through his hero Abu Sayf of Siruj:-

"If the Alexandrian preceded me, know that she  
has preceded the shower, yet the shower's  
excellence belongs not to the dew."<sup>81</sup>

In spite of his mastery over the composition of Maqamat which astonished the learned men, of the time al-Hariri did not conceal the truth and earnestly admitted that Badi' al-Zaman was inventor of the Maqamat composition.<sup>82</sup> If he had not been a fact, he would have denied it in vain words. His fact again goes in favour of Badi' al-Zaman al-Harabani.

Finally, the question is :- Could al-Hariri or any other Maqamat writer if al-Harabani had not laid the foundation of this art? The answer that comes to mind automatically is 'No' with a capital N.

---

80. Maroon Abbud, Badi' al-Zaman pp 41 to 43, 45

81. Sayf al-Maqamat pp. 56, 82

82. Chenery, Assemblies of Al-Hariri p. 272.

"Major writers of Maqamat and main characteristics,"  
of their works.

---

Chapter III

The origin of the Maqamat has been a mystery. To required hard labour to find out its source in the ancient Arabic literature. The writers on the works of the Maqamat have not paid special attention to this particular point. This is why it is still discussed as to who is the originator of the Maqamat writing and under what circumstances the Maqamat came into existence.<sup>1,2</sup>

No doubt, the Maqamat is one of the most important areas of the Arabic literature because of its object, philology and lexicon. Thus one could make sentences without committing mistakes, decorated with Badi' and Taj' along with reliance on rhyme and equivalent sounds of words.<sup>1</sup>

Arabs, as it is said have no Maqamat before the appearance of Maqamat Badi' al-Taman al-Hamadani (358-390 AH). He is therefore originator of this art of classical writing, as stated by Al Hariri in the proface of his Maqamat.<sup>2</sup> In view of this fact some writers have opined that Badi' al-Taman borrowed this form of composition from ancient tales and fables.

---

1. Tayf al-Maqamat, pp Preface

2. Umar Farooq, al-Rasail..., Preface and pp 21, 22

one of the learned scholars like Zakī Muḥarrak has tried to prove that Maqamat al-Haradhani are taken from the accounts of Ibn Duraid.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Duraid was a narrator (ḥawī) learned figure and a philologist, who related the accounts of Arab folk and its inhabitants. In fact there is similarity between the accounts of Ibn Duraid and Maqamat al-Haradhani in respect of the subject matter i.e. stories and 'ajf', still there is a wide difference between them. The words, place and the hero of the Maqamat are the essentials of Maqamat al-Haradhani. They are based on recreation and mastery in the field of knowledge and learning. This, however, does not mean that al-Haradhani was not aware of the accounts of Ibn Duraid or of tales and legends by the Arabs related in ancient times but the distinction becomes evident when one reads these accounts and then goes through the Maqamat and finds out its object and mode of writing as a unique model in itself. Even if it is admitted for a moment that al-Haradhani was not its creator, it is an irrefutable fact that his Maqamat or the first production of the kind has have come down to us.<sup>45</sup>

As regards the major writers of the Maqamat in Arabic, there are only two personalities who are well known in the literary circle of the Arabs. The Arabic literature of the Abbasids is proud of its remarkable achievement and is

3. Zakī Muḥarrak, al-Naṭḥ al-Fannī, p. 197

4. Zayf al-Maqama pp. 23, 24

5. Umar Farrukh, al-Ḥasa'il... pp. 21, 22



counted as a landmark in the history of Arabic literature. Of course, the number of Maqamat writers is a handsome one, but none of them could achieve the fame which was attained by Al-Hamadhani and Al-Hariri.

Undoubtedly, it is Badi' al-Zaman who guided on this path and is himself responsible to originate this magnificent style in the Arabic literature. Al-Hariri followed him a century later and it was to his credit that the grandeur of the Maqamat appeared in its highest popular form appealing firmly to the readers, as it had reached the summit of popularity in the age of Abbasids and afterwards the scholars and the men of letters of all Arabic countries learnt it by heart and practised this form of composition as if it had been something religious. In truth, they were surprised to see al-Hamadhani's motifs in maxims, riddles etc. frequently found in his Maqamat.<sup>5,6</sup>

Al-Hariri's admiration is apparent from this <sup>fact</sup> that his followers were numerous who imitated his Maqamat. But it has been held by all literary figures that none could achieve the position and glory attained by al-Hariri. His name is as alive today as it had been in the past, though nine centuries have elapsed since then.

As this stage is necessary to lay down the requisites of the Maqamat, so that it might be convenient to understand the Maqamat of al-Hamadhani and Al-Buriri, because those features are found in all Maqamat compositions. Thus the following are the requisites of the Maqamat:<sup>7</sup>

1. An Assembly in which the event concerning the Maqamat takes place.
2. A narrator for all the Maqamat who narrates the whole event which happens in Assemblies.
3. Here (i.e. Mukdhar) is the same person in all the Maqamat and is most likely an imaginary figure. He bears several merits and also knows each kind of fraud. The Maqamat display his command on language, his vast knowledge of literature, religion etc. He is a poet, a preacher, a pious man concealing his ostentacy, a man of virtues hiding his vices, appearing really in Assemblies in rotten garment for seeking undue advantages etc.

Maqamat is always held in an assembly where narrator and Mukdhar meet each other. The hero always represents himself in disguise, because he knows or is suspicious about the presence of the Hafi at the place where Maqamat is held. Sometimes the Hafi is present on the scene, while another time he is expected to be meeting there. Thus the plot opens when he begins to estate about the hero (Mukdhar) and his affairs or the hero is made to relate his

---

7. Umar Farrukh al-Rasa'il... pp. 22-24

own affairs. He here does not reveal his affairs unless he receives money or dress from those who attend the Assembly. Usually the audience come to know that the said here has cheated them, even when they do not feel it because he has entertained them abundantly and they were benighted by his share wit.

4. Plot: The story related in Maqamat is circled by one plot. It does not always encourage to do good or become honest and virtuous. Hence it becomes an unique model of itself.

5. Story: Each Maqamat deals with a story. Among all the Maqamat there is one link which connects each of them together. The compiler, the narrator and the hero are the same person in each Maqamat. Sometimes the stories related recall occurrences of the antique past. But the narrator is the same individual.

6. Subject: Its subjects are various e.g. literary, juridical, amusing, bravery, concerning wine etc. '1' These subjects are described by Al-Hamadani without any proper arrangement.

But Al-Hariri has produced them on a particular pattern. The subject is sometimes lengthy and sometimes short.

7. Name of the Maqamat: Generally the name is derived from the place where the Maqamat is held, such as 'Al-Damishqin', 'Al-Jabrizia', 'Al-Ramlia', (refers to Ramla in Palestine), 'Al-Magradia', 'Al-Samarqandia', 'Al-Balkhia', 'Al-Rufia', 'Al-

---

Baghdadia', Al-Iraqia', etc. or it is borrowed from the plot or points on which a Maqama circles e.g. Al-Dinaria, Al-Hirsa, Al-Sheria, Al-Iblacia, Al-Tharra, etc.

8. Personality in Maqamat: It is not the personality of the hero which appears in Maqamat, but it is undoubtedly of the compiler himself. It is this personality which shows a wide knowledge in all respects specially regarding Arabic learning in prose, poetry, sermons, riddles, maxims etc.

9. Art in Maqamat: It is an art of decoration of words (particularly as produced by Al-Hariri). This is what is known as frequent use of 'raji' and 'Badi', etc. similarly there is maximum use of comparison and balance of words together with command on oratory which are found in sermons of the Maqamat.

10. Verse: Maqamat is a story in rhymed prose but there are also verses at some places either by the hero (Muhammad) or borrowed from the poetry of other poets. Sometimes he recites verses in order to show his mastery over poetry or to display his merits in 'adi' (particularly existing in Al-Hariri's Maqamat).

Maqamat is also a literary discourse which is composed in the form of a story. The object is not the story itself but through it Al-Hariri has created wonder by disclosing a known incident and has produced a unique mode of composition. Thus he wants to educate people and

---

teach him a matchless style of writing in which the subject matter is related, this is why that the words are more important than the meaning in Maqamat.<sup>8</sup>

Briefly, Al-Hamadhani has presented his Maqamat for the sole object of words and his love for lexicon and Philology. The main object of his Maqamat is decoration of words, this is also the object of Al-Hariri in his Maqamat. At this stage it is essential to mention the particulars of Maqamat Al-Hamadhani and Al-Hariri on which their reputation lies.

BADI' AL-ZAMAN AL-HAMADHANI

(358-398 A.H. = 969-1007 A.D. )

His name was Ahmed b. Husain and he was known as Badi' al-Zaman i.e. the Vendor of the Time. He was born in the year 358 A.H. at Hamdhan, a hilly town in Iran and died in the year 398 A.H. at the age of 40. He belonged to an Arabian family of Hudar and Laghlab. Two of his reputed teachers were Ahmed Ibn Faris who had written Kitab al-Jarri and 'Isa Ibn Hisham al-Akhbari. Later on he went to Ray where Ab-Saheb ~~the~~ 'Abbad, who was minister of the first Buyyids, was residing. He had great respect for poets and men of letters and always bestowed wealth upon them.<sup>8,9</sup>

In 382 A.H. Al-Hamadhani proceeded to Turasan and Nishapur, as cited by Al-Ha'libi. He was at Nishapur  
U. Sayf, al-Maqamat pp. 9, 10, 13, 14

9. Maroon Abbud, Badi' al-Zaman pp. 16, 10 to 55, 41

that a contest took place between him and Abu Bakr al-Kharrizmi. Al-Hamadani won the contest and was declared superior to him. He wrote his Maqamat as Nisabur and gave to his pupils. They were much attracted by its splendour. It is said that he had composed 400 Maqamat as one Rasib (secretary). In 393 A.H. he left Nisabur and moved from one place to another in Khurasan. In the meantime a war raged between Samanids and Ghaznavids. He was taken on the way and was deprived of his belongings. However, he reached the Amir of Samghistan, namely Khalif b. Ahmad (344/399 A.H.). In his opinion al-Hamadani had raised him as a distinguished personality of his age. He also composed Maqamat in his praise and finally admired and admired his good qualities and generosity. In the end, he was allowed to go to Herat in Afghanistan. Herat at that time was under the Ghaznavids. Al-Hamadani often wished to meet Mahmud Ghaznavi, a great conqueror of Iran and India and desired to be included among his retinue and secretaries. In the words of Al-Jahiz, al-Hamadani had composed a Qasida for him. Due unfortunately he could not meet Mahmud Ghaznavi and returned to Iraq complaining against him, as noted in his epistles.

Al-Hamadani has stated that he had composed 400 Maqamat, but it seems to be an exaggerated statement, because the number of his Maqamat received by us, is only

---

51 or 52. He has not fixed the number of his Maqamat carelessly. Before producing them he knew that each Maqama was an Assembly (i.e. Majlis) itself. The number of Assemblies was made equivalent to the number of weeks of the year of Al-Hijra. The variation of the total number of Maqamat being 50, 51 or 52 throws light on the fact that the Islamic calendar consists of 50 weeks and some days. Such a variation is also found in his epistles (Risail) whose number is said to be 50, 51 or 52. A discussion on this issue is available in 'Ikhtwan al-Safa'<sup>10</sup>

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF MAQAMA AL-FARADHANI<sup>10</sup>

Firstly: a narrator namely, 'Isa b. Hisham (an unknown person in the opinion of Al-Hariri as noted in the preface of his Maqamat) has been mentioned. Dr. Professor Anis al-Majidi has held that one of his teachers was 'Isa b. Hisham Al-Akhbari and 'Al-Faradhani refers to him.

The hero of his Maqamat is 'bul Fakh 'Al-Ashkandari who was also an unknown person as described by 'Al-Hariri in the Introduction of his Maqamat. The word 'Al-Ashkandari' indicates that he belonged to 'Al-Ashkandaria' which was situated in the south of Iraq.

Secondly: Al-Faradhani was a genius man and he invented a new mode of composition along with those of

---

10. Umar Farukh, al-Risail,.... pp. 27 to 29

stories related in his Maqamat.

Thirdly: His Maqamat consist of different type of discussions. Some of them deal with dry and curious topics; e.g. questions on jurisprudence and literature, but the others are amusing and entertain the readers.

Fourthly: His Maqamat are remarkable in creating a sense of realization with pleasure for his readers. He is also capable of drawing a fine picture in each Maqama along with other qualities.

Fifthly: The elements of entertainments are found in abundance in his Maqamat. The main issue is not always of vital importance and occasionally there are features based on recreation and amusement with forceful ingenuity.

Sixthly: Through his Maqamat on the one hand he begins to alarm his readers in clear words, while on the other hand he depicts collective satire very nicely and reveals their vices. Even when he does not believe in removing those vices through advice or admonition, he by threatening his companion, he pleases others and prohibits them from committing such faults.

The style of Al-Hamadhani is original and magnificent. The ornamentation of sentences and decoration of words create wonder. His themes are sometimes very *natural*

---



e.g. a man proscribing medicines for passengers on board', or 'a man condemning a Dinar' (Hal) once and praising it afterwards, or 'a citizen deceiving a villager and easing in his account'.

The Saji and artificiality is not much noticeable, although it is found at certain places. The rhyme and metre is not essential for Al-Hamadhani.

Seventhly: Al-Hamadhani deals with several themes in his Maqamat. In many of them, indeed there is boggery and mendacity. The learned speaker addresses the audience with his sweet, melodious and eloquent speech and in deception and disguise deprives them of their money, which they offer him in plenty. Such a hero is Abul Fash al-Ashdadi, who wanders from place to place and this is most likely that Al-Hamadhani has named many of his Maqamat after the cities he had roamed about. Most of these cities are in Persia. Sometimes he gives up this practice and calls his Maqama after the name of an animal, which is related in it, e.g. Al-Asadia; or he names it after an edible thing described in it, e.g. 'Al-Shadria referring to the diet 'Al-Shadria'. He has also named some of his Maqamat after their theme, e.g. 'Al-Wa'iz', for it revolves round a sermon, 'Al-Qariz', for it recites verses, 'Al-Ibleesia', for there is a meeting with the Satan, 'Al-Mulukia', for he needs a monarch, Khalf b. Ahmad, etc.

11. Zayf, Al-Maqamat pp. 24, 25

Thus it is evident that he has described various themes in his Maqamat. The object is to show his decorated literary style in a marvellous ornamental language. The primary purpose of the Maqamat is to produce a form of composition in 'Saj' while its secondary aim may be called as story telling.<sup>11</sup>

### A GLANCE IN HIS MAQAM.<sup>12,13,14</sup>

In Maqama 'Al-Mulukia Isa b. Hisham has cited Abul Fath al-Ashkandari about the famous king and then he has admired Khalif b. Ahmed of Saffiyan. The praise of the aforesaid Amir is in the form of prose but it appears as if it is made in the form of poetry. It is a remarkable achievement of Al-Hamadhani that Panegyric was made in poetry till his age but he created the charm of poetry in 'Saj' as if it was a poetry itself.

In Maqama Al-Iraqia' 'Al-Sheria' and Al-Taricia', Al-Hamadhani has criticised eminent poets and their poetry.

In Maqama 'Al-Jahizia'<sup>15</sup>, he speaks through Abul Fath and presents himself as Jahiz of his age. He firmly declares that every age has its own Jahiz, hence he is

---

12. Sayf, al-Maqamat pp. 25 to 32

13. Maroon Abbud, Badi' al-Zaman pp 34 to 37

14. Umar Farukh, Al-Fasa'il... p. 23

15. Al-Husri, Zahr al-Adab pp. 309, 335, 404, 509, 511  
Vol. VI

Johns of his age.

Religious norms are laid down in Maqama Al-Ahwasia and 'Al-Ma'zi'. In those norms he has stood firmly by the side of Ahl al-Sunnah and has condemned the atheist. Further he has criticized the 'Mazilite'.

In Maqama 'Al-Mariqat' Abul Fath lands in Maricao, meets Ishaq al-Hishm along with Abu Fadh al-Asqari al-Murshid and both of them soon recognize Abul Fath. At this place he strongly criticizes the 'Mazilite' and their notions.

In Maqama 'Al-Ilm' Abul Fath has encouraged students to work hard and to learn and understand everything. This Maqama increases learning in many respects.

In Maqama 'Al-Asad' all the qualities of a lion are related in detail which adds to our knowledge.

In Maqama 'Al-Hamdhania', the events of Sayf al-Daula's time who died in 326 A.H. are narrated. Abul Fath is made to describe all the qualities of a horse on Sayf al-Daula's demand in soft philological manner.

In Maqama 'Al-Qasbiya' a famous poet of Umayyad period, named Ishaq al-Hishm, appears and recites some of his verses.

In Maqama 'Al-Sayf' the accounts of Muhammad b.

---

Ishaq Al-Sayyri, who died in 275 A.H., are related. In al-Hamadani, as well as in Sayyri, the happenings of the past are depicted but this does not mean that al-Hamadani was more interested in the past than the present. This is why he has presented several affairs of his own age along with the characteristics of its people, as for example in Maqama Al-Baghdadi.

In Maqama Al-Baghdadi<sup>15, 16, 17</sup>, the life of the people of Baghdad is vividly related. It clearly proves that al-Hamadani was also interested in the affairs of his own time.

In Maqama 'Al-Hosabiyat'<sup>18</sup>, the corruption prevailing among the Qadis (judges) and their injustice is narrated through Isa b. Hisham, who goes weekly for prayers to Neesapur and there sees a man wearing (alansawa, a particular cap worn by Qadis. The injustice of the Qadis, widespread corruption and their immoral deeds, are the most important topics dealt with in this Maqama.

In the days of al-Hamadani as found in the above Maqama, the Qadis used to seize public property, confiscate waqf and officers' estates without any consideration of their responsibility. Thus the courts of law were full of

- 
16. Al-Husri, Zahr al-Adab pp. 697, 787 Vol. III  
 17. Al-Husri, Zahr al-Adab pp. 917, 944, 996, 1007, 1080, 1110  
 to 1112 Vol. IV  
 18. Maroon Abadi, Bad'i al-Zaman pp. 35 to 37

injustice and mal-administration. This Maqama depicts their life completely e.g. their dress, their eating and drinking habits, their pastime, manners etc. All these facts go to prove that Al-Ramadhanidepicts the social life of his age in the best possible manner.

In Maqama Al-Ikhsan, he produces an unique theme which was not attempted by any writer in the past. He states that Isa b. Nisham went down in the valley of Jinn, where his camel had gone astray and he had reached there in search of the said camel. The said valley was green, full of canals, trees and flowers. At that place an old man was sitting whom he paid compliments and the former commended him to take his seat. Then the old man asked him about Arabic poetry and he recited the verses of Imru' al-Qays, Labid bin al-Abras and Ru'fa. Further he requested him (the old man) to recite his own verses and began to recite the poetry of Jarir. At this, Isa b. Nisham wondered as to how he had imitated Jarir's poetry. Lastly the old man after showing his merits disappeared leaving Isa b. Nisham all alone.

This Maqama has paved the way for a new subject i.e. Satan and the unseen world, for the later writers.

Maqama Al-Fasariyya,<sup>15</sup> says that Isa b. Nisham was travelling in a dark night when 'Abul Fatah met him

and with his eloquent speech and charming poetry won his heart and thus obtained money for himself. Al-Haradani has nicely depicted the nocturnal journey, its dismay in meeting with Abul Fath al-Ashkandari. He has further referred to the well known class of robbers (Makdin), who used to earn their livelihood by cheating in his own age.

In Maqama 'Al-Baladhiya'<sup>15</sup>, Abul Fath meets Isa b. Hisham, accompanies him in his journey, describes his miseries and lastly demands money (Dinar) from him. At the same time he is recognised by one person who has seen him (Abul Fath) begging in the market of Iraq. On this Abul Fath admits the same and recites two verses acknowledging his fraud.

<sup>16</sup>  
In Maqama 'Al-Bukhariya', Abul Fath appears with a lad in the mosque of Bukhara, relates his (lad's) misfortune and pains and thus collects a good deal of amount for himself. This trick played by Abul Fath is very successful and the readers of this Maqama are understruck by it.

<sup>16</sup>  
In Maqama 'Al-Tufia', Isa b. Hisham calls his youth as night and old age as day. Further he remembers the young age with the appearance of the day. The whole Maqama relates life's similarity with day and night. The story begins when Isa b. Hisham goes to Hufa along with his friend and there he sees Abul Fath begging and storing wealth.

---

Isa b. Hisham opens the door and recognises 'Abul Fash who was making money in disguise.

In Maqama 'Al-Adharbi-jani'<sup>17</sup>, Isa b. Hisham goes to Adharbi-jan for recreation, sees Abul Fash in disguise who was speaking fluently and circulating letter in which his worries were related. Finally, Isa becomes aware of the face and warns Abul Fash whose fraud was widespread.

In Maqama 'Al-Azazi'<sup>17</sup>, Isa b. Hisham visits Baghdad for purchasing dates. There he sees a man tying turban on his head as a veil, extending his arms and taking children into them. He was sighing and reciting verses in order to get alms.

In Maqama 'Al-Basri'<sup>17</sup>, Isa b. Hisham visits Basra and meets Abul Fash who tells him that he was a resident of Askandria. Then he describes hard life of beggars and poor people. Thus he obtains financial aid and leaves for some other place.

In Maqama 'Al-Qazwani'<sup>17</sup>, Isa b. Hisham is touring a Persian city called Qazwan at that time. 'Abul Fash comes on the stage in disguise and relates his torments dealing with hard life and beggary. He tells the audience that he has left all other places only to seek his fortune in this land. At last he secures gifts and departs. Isa recognises him

---

in the end and asked him whether he belonged to the tribe of 'Nebeeg'. Abul Fath admits it and reveals his identity.

In Maqama 'Al-Makbūfiya'<sup>17</sup>, Isa b. Nishan reached Ahwas, where he sees Abul Fath speaking eloquently and appearing in the guise of a blind man when he begins to recite verses on the hardships of aim and poverty in bad words. Isa gives him a dinar and Abul Fath praises him for it, though he was looking like a blind man. Then, after recognising him, Isa asked him about his blindness, he replied that he was a man of various performances and this was only a means to earn his livelihood, because time was too hard and bad for the poor.

In Maqama 'Al-Sajisaniya'<sup>17, 18</sup>, Isa b. Nishan goes to Sajisani for certain work. Abul Fath is seen on horse back in disguise who speaks to the crowd thus: 'I am an inhabitant of Yemen, I wander from place to place. I have learned various arts. I can remove all vices of people and I have brought a medicine for all diseases. Isa comes to know soon that he was Abul Fath al-Makbūfi and while asking him about the said medicine, Abul Fath leaves that place.

In Maqama 'Al-Giradea'<sup>17</sup>, Isa b. Nishan sees a crowd on the bank of Najla (Ligria) in Bagdad and goes there. Abul Fath appears in disguise, strikes a money bag and dances before the audience and he collects money. Finally, Isa recognises him and asks why he had adopted such a mean method

---



of earning money. Abul Fath replies that the vagaries of time had compelled him to do so and that a deceiver is not really a fool.

In Maqama 'Al-Astahaniya'<sup>17,18</sup>, Isa b. Hisham stays at Isfahan, a city in Iran where he hears the call for prayer. When the prayer is over, the Imam says to the people that those who love God and his prophets should stay for a while. Isa too stays and Abul Fath (who said Iran) begins his speech. In the end, he says that he has seen the prophet in his sleep and the prophet has taught him some prayers (dua) which he has introduced. If anyone needs them, he should say him something as a gift. Very shortly he gets a lot of Dinaras and Isa is amazed to see all this. Finally, Isa recognizes Abul Fath and he enquires about his fraudulent method. Abul Fath replies that the people were monkeys and one should try to behave as a superior to them. 'One should enjoy his life till the death comes', he adds.

#### HIS MORE OF TRICKS<sup>19,20</sup>

The first thing which strikes the reader of his Maqama is the narration of his story by Isa b. Hisham and the description of the narrator (Nawi) and the Mukaddi (Hero) Abul Fath who, through his deceitful means, captures the

---

19. Haroon Abbud, 'Badi' al-Taman pp. 34 to 37, 41 to 45.

20. Zayf, Al-Maqama no. 32 to 34, 42, 43.

hearts of his audience and with great zeal of his literary genius obtained gifts. The primary aim of Al-Ramadhani is to employ words to show their particular modes (Asalab) which attract the audience. Thus it is obvious that his object was not story telling but producing a literary work versatile in nature, decorated with collected words and combined with magnificence of Badi', Jinas and Tabak, that had been prevalent in his age. This is the cause of compiling his Maqamat in Saj' which gained fame and popularity in his own time. Formerly, Ibn al-'Amood had used this style in his epistles and other writers were also fascinated by this new style. In such circumstances it was indispensable for Al-Ramadhani to win favour of his contemporaries by producing his Maqamat in this decorated style.

In the composition of the Maqamat he has shown his extraordinary skill and merits which have made him popular in literary circles of the Arab world. In fact, Al-Ramadhani's command to use words with 'Saj', their fluency, philological attributes, variety of meaning and maxims clearly display his remarkable achievements.

Recreation is felt while going through his Maqamat at various places. One finds pleasure in his each Maqama. For instance, 'Al-Maddeeria' refers to smoking root with sour milk and its varieties are described with due experience etc.

The simplicity and fluency of words and sentences are abundant in his Maqamat. Besides, entertainment is so

---

much found in them, which make their readers careful.

Perhaps one can say that his *Maqamat* do not consist of much poetry. It is true, because it is not his habit to quote many verses in *Maqamat*, though he quotes a number of maxims, Quranic Procepts and such other material in them.<sup>20</sup>

ABU-FARISI OR IBN AL-SARIRI

446 A.H. (1054 A.D.)

516 A.H. (1122 A.D.)

Abu Mohammed al-Casim b. Ali al-Farisi or Ibn al-Farisi<sup>21, 22, 23</sup> came from an Arabian family and was born at Washan, a border of Basra in 446 A.H. He learned religious works, philological matters and Grammar. He was a man of outstanding merits in Logic, jurisprudence and other branches of knowledge. Since his youth he was religious and industrious and displayed his remarkable genius in composition of his *Maqamat*. He used to visit Baghdad but none acknowledged his merits until the appearance of his *Maqamat*<sup>which</sup> made him well known. It is said that even his native people denied 'the *Maqamat*,'<sup>and</sup> his own friends and they deemed it to be written by some European writer from whom al-Farisi had inherited and named after him. In order to prove his work as his self composition, they urged him to produce *Maqamat* similar to that which was already known to

---

21. *Dayf*, al-*Maqamat* pp 45, 46, 48

22. Umar Farukh, al-Rasa'il pp. 52, 51, 51

23. *Yakut*, *Ma'jam al-Udaba* pp. 16, 215-266

them, Al-Hariri, then, stayed about 40 days in his house but could not write even two sentences like the former <sup>20</sup>Maqamat. In despair he returned to Basra and at this place he attempted to Maqamat. He again went to Baghdad and within no time his fame was spread everywhere in the capital. <sup>22</sup>

Some writers have said that the Governor of Basra had ordered him to compile Maqamat; others have suggested that Abu Shairan (512 to 529 A.H.) who was minister to al-Mustashid had commanded him for its composition, but some others have opined that a visitor named Ibn Sadyq is referred. The reference in the preface of his Maqamat has explained the aforesaid reasons for its compilation. <sup>21</sup>

He began to compile this illustrious work in 495 A.H. and completed in 504 A.H. As noted by him in the introduction of the Maqamat he followed al-Mas'udi in this respect but increased decoration of words in them. <sup>21, 22</sup>

In the words of Prof. Gibb <sup>24</sup> "In the domain of philology and belles-lettres proper, all other names during this period are overshadowed by that of Al-Hariri, of Basra (1054-1122 A.D.). He received the usual philological education in the still famous school of his native town and filled a minor part in the bureaucracy, with which a small inheritance enabled him to resume his philological studies, like most men of his class since the time of 'Abd al-Rahman, he had

---

24. Gibb, Arabic literature pp. 87, 88

acquired a ready mastery over the art of 'raji' but had not written apparently anything of note until he sprang suddenly into fame by the publication of his 'Maqamat'. These were frankly imitated from 'Badi' al-Zaman, the imitation extending not only to the literary form but even to the 'mise en scene' and the character of the narrators, Hariri's Abu Zayd of Seraf being represented as just such another witty vagabond as Hamadhani's Abul Inan of 'Alexandria'. The incident which led him to compose his 'Maqamat' is thus related in his own words: 'Abu Zayd of Seraf was an unfortunate old beggar full of eloquence, who came to us in Hama, and one day he stood up in the mosque of the Banu Haram (the quarter in which Hariri lived) and after pronouncing a greeting he addressed himself to the people.... They were charmed with his eloquence and wit and the beautiful phrasing of his speech. On this occasion he related the capture of his daughter by the Greeks as I have related it in the 'Maqamat' called 'of the Hara'. That same evening a number of the eminent and learned men of Hama were gathered at my house and I told them what I had seen and heard of this beggar and of the elegant style and witty allusiveness which he had employed to effect his purpose. Thereupon everyone else there told that he too had seen of this same beggar, each in his own mosque, what I had seen.... for he used to change his dress and appearance in every mosque and show his skill in all kinds of artifices. They were astonished at the pains he took to make his subject

---

and at his cunning in changing his appearance and at his ingenuity. So I wrote the *Maqamat* of the *Harari* and thereafter constructed upon it the remainder of the *Maqamat*." <sup>24</sup>

According to R.A. Nicholson, Al-Hariri was 'less original than Badi' al-Zaman, but far beyond him in variety of learning and copiousness of language.' <sup>25</sup> He again states that he 'produced in his *Maqamat* a masterpiece which for eight centuries has been esteemed as next to the *Quran*, the chief treasure of the Arabic tongue.' <sup>25</sup>

"In the preface to his work he says that the composition of *Maqamat* was suggested to him by one whose suggestion is a command and one whom it is a pleasure to obey." This was a distinguished Persian statesman, Anushirvan b. Khalid, who afterwards served as vizier under the Caliph Mustarchid Bilal (1118-1135 A.D.) and Sultan Mas'ud, the Seljuk (1133-1152 A.D.) but at the time he made Hariri's acquaintance he was living in retirement at Hama and devoting himself to literary studies. Hariri begged to be excused on the score that his abilities were unequal to the task, 'for the lame steed cannot run like the strong courser.' Finally he yielded to the request of Anushirvan, and to quote his own words,....I composed.... fifty *Maqamat*", adds Nicholson. <sup>25</sup>

So far as the place of writing of the *Maqamat* is concerned, it is also disputed. Some have asserted that it

---

25. Nicholson, *Literary history of the Arabs* v. 329

was composed in Baghdad; others declare Basra its birth place from where he took it to Baghdad and presented it to the literary figures of his time, there is also a class of people, as already mentioned, who denied the Maqamat to be a composition of Al-Hariri. Hence they demanded a similar Maqamat from <sup>him</sup> to prove his assertion. Al-Hariri, as detailed earlier, was unable to produce a new Maqamat at Baghdad and returned to Basra. At this place he composed ten new Maqamat, went back to Baghdad and his fame was spread everywhere in the capital.<sup>26</sup>

All above statements appear to be untrue and far from reality. It is now almost confirmed that Hariri has composed his Maqamat at one time and at one place in order to contest the fifty Maqamat of Al-Tamadduni. It is not a fact that he has written forty Maqamat at one time and then he has added ten Maqamat.<sup>27, 28</sup>

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF MAQAMAT AL-HARIRI

A. Al-Hariri or Ibn al-Hariri refers his Maqamat to Al-Harith b. Hammam al-Basri by which he means himself. It is borrowed from the saying of the Prophet... <sup>كَلِمَاتُ حَارِثٍ وَحَمَّامٍ صَامٍ</sup>  
i.e. 'all of you are Harith and Hammam.' Harith means 'fastid'

26. Ahmad H. Mustafa, Miftah pp. 179 to 181

27. Tayf, al-Maqama pp. 48, 49

28. Umar Farukh, al-Nasa'ih pp. 54, 55

i.e. one who earns his livelihood, and 'Hammam' means one who carefully manages."

He has chosen a hero, Abu 'ayd al-Taraji and a narrator Harith b. Hammam for his 'Maqamat. All must be united that al-Hariri is a fictitious personality, but Abu 'ayd is a living fact. To prove this also they referred to a statement of Hariri which is also the main cause of his composition of the 'Maqamat. The 18th 'Maqama 'al-Hariri, names Abu 'ayd who was a real living man and not a fictitious personality. Hariri composed this 'Maqama first of all and then he compiled the rest of the 'Maqamat.<sup>29, 29</sup>

Some writers have held that Abu 'ayd stands for Muta'ahar b. Salan, who was a reputed Grammarian in the days of Hariri. He was a national hero of Hama, who accompanied Hariri and put up with him at Hama. He died in the year 510 A.H. Hariri relates his 'Maqamat through <sup>the</sup> 'ayd and the latter has also described some writings of Hariri. The books on Grammarians clearly mention Muta'ahar b. Salan as one of the teachers of Hariri. Thus there is no doubt that he was a man who lived during Hariri's lifetime.

Some other persons have said that Abu 'ayd is only an imaginary figure. In support of their view they have emphasised that Abu 'ayd is not such as 'bul 'ash of al-Hamadhani. He is only a creation of al-Hariri on which the 'Maqamat play their part.<sup>29, 30</sup>

---

29. 'ayf, Al-Maqama no. 19, 50

30. 'bul 'ai b. 'Imad, Shadarat no 50, 51



About the character of Abu Sayd, Nicholson states thus 'the hero of Hariri's work, Abu Sayd, whose adventures are related by a certain Harith b. Hamman, under which name the author is supposed to signify himself. According to the general tradition, Hariri was one day seated with a number of servants in the mosque of Banu Haram at Basra, when an old man entered, footsore and travel-stained. On being asked who he was, and whence he came, he answered that his name of honour was Abu Sayd and that he came from Seruj. He described in eloquent and moving terms how his native town had been plundered by the Greeks, who made his daughter a captive and drove him forth to exile and poverty. Hariri was so struck with his wonderful powers of improvisation that on the same evening he began to compose the *Maqamat* of the Banu Haram, where Abu Sayd is introduced in his invariable character.<sup>31</sup> A crafty old man, full of genius and learning, unscrupulous of the artifices which he uses to effect his purpose, reckless in spending in forbidden indulgences the money he has obtained by his wit or deceit, but with veins of true feeling in him, and ever yielding to unfeigned emotion when he remembers his devastated home and his captive child,<sup>32</sup> he adds.

About Abu Sayd, Thomas Cheney states the following:

"This wanderer had excited the curiosity of the company by the fluency and eloquence of his address, in which he had related the destruction of his city, the loss of his daughter, and his own exile and poverty. Hariri went home and wrote *Hararniyah*, the usual order of narration is

---

31. Nicholson, *Literary history of the Arabs* v. 331

reversed, for Abu Tayd is his own Nafi, and Tarikh son of Harman is introduced incidentally. Abu Tayd is made to say that he had long wished to visit Baera, the city of learning and piety, of mosques and shrines, and that at last, when fortune had brought him to it, he had made his way one evening to the mosque, where the people are engaged in a grammatical discussion on the Haruf-ul-Badai or interchangeable letters.... His hero Abu Tayd is always the same ill-dressed crafty old man, full of genius and learning etc. There can be no doubt that Hariri came to recount the groundwork of Abu Tayd's history as true, however, much the vagabond improviser may romance on other matters."<sup>32</sup>

The commentator al-Razi, cited by De Sacy in his commentary to the 40th Assembly, relates as follows... 'Coraji was a fluent old man, full of eloquence and cleverness, who visited us in Baera, and standing in the mosque of Yusu Karam conversed with the people and asked of them' etc.<sup>32</sup>

## B. Internal qualities of Maqamat al-Tariri:-

- (i) His Maqamat are less inventive than Maqamat al-Hamadhani and they are also less regular in variety.
- (ii) In truth, Hariri compared his Maqamat with those of al-Hamadhani in respect of its number, choice and characters.
- (iii) In spirit, brevity and the main point, his Maqamat do not attain the nearness achieved by his predecessor, al-Hamadhani.

---

<sup>32</sup>. Chenery, Assemblies of al-Tariri no. 2 etc.

- (iv) Maqamat al-Hariri are a short circle of knowledge in lexicography, grammar, history, poetry, Quranic quotations, proverbs and idioms.

C.

# ITS OUTWARD APPEARANCE:- 53

- (i) His Maqamat are lengthy than that of al-Hamadhani
- (ii) They contain many unfamiliar words which he uses with all fineness and decoration.
- (iii) Hariri has a good deal of taste in ornamentation of his Maqamat through 'fajr'. Then he also makes full attempt to coin words and their meaning in 'fajr'. The beauty of decoration and balance of words (i.e. rhyming) as well as metonymy and metaphor make his Maqamat a matchless record in Arabic literature.
- (iv) Maqamat Hariri contains various kinds of 'Badi' e.g. riddles, maxims, pointed or unpointed words or one being pointed and the other unpointed, etc.
  - a. The maxims are available in Maqamat al-Ma'arifi
  - b. The example of resemblance of words in Maqamat al-Ma'arifi.
  - c. Unpointed words are found in Maqamat al-Ma'arifi.
  - d. Half unpointed and the rest pointed words are related in Maqamat al-Ma'arifi and al-Ma'arifi, respectively.
  - e. The example of resemblance in reading from the beginning in one way and from the end in another way is seen in Maqamat al-Ma'arifi.

(v) A large number of verses are found in his Maqamat which prove his capacity of composition in poetry. Except four verses in the 15th Maqama, all verses belong to Hariri.

(vi) So far as the artistic *qualifications* in Maqamat are concerned, Hariri is adept in it. Only the preface of his Maqamat is sufficient to attract the readers, what to say of other qualifications.

D. PURPOSE OF HIS MAQAMAT:

Hariri insists that he has composed his Maqamat for the purpose of teaching good moral, hence he informs his readers about the virtues and vices, so that they could save themselves from unfair ways.<sup>33</sup>

According to Gibb 'Hariri never forget that the primary purpose of the Maqamat was to amuse and entertain, and throughout his book the wit of the descriptions and the dialogue is set off by the delicacy and charm of the verses and the more serious passages.'<sup>34</sup>

In the words of Nicholson 'Hariri then proceeds to argue that his Maqamat are not mere frivolous stories. Hariri insists that his Assemblies have a moral purpose. The ignorant and malicious, he says, will probably condemn his works, but intelligent readers will perceive, if they lay prejudice aside, that it is as useful and instructive as the fables of La Fontaine to whom no one has ever objected.'<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>. Gibb, Arab literatures. 89

<sup>35</sup>. Nicholson, Literary history of the Arabs p. 330

Al-Sherishi states about its object that 'out-ardly it is based on falsehood but the aim of Hariri was to give training to the student, to teach him morality, and to sharpen his wit, so that he may learn experiences of the world from the accounts of Seruji and become aware of the coming hardships. Thus he will be able to face them and be alert from ignorance and heedlessness....'<sup>36</sup>

But the fact is that the real purpose of Maqamat has failed on account of those grounds :-<sup>36, 37</sup>

- (i) Because he has amply used insulting and abusive words and has constructed some of his Maqamat on the foundation of sexual ideas. Thus the purpose of the dramatist has vanished, when he conceived them good conduct and tries to cure them from various evils.
- (ii) Because Hariri has produced those vices by means of amusement. The readers go through them for pleasure and entertainment.<sup>37</sup>

F.

#### STYLE OF HARIRI:-

In the words of Thomas Chomery his style is 'a continuous display of rhetorical artifices, and is full from beginning to the end, of alliteration, assonance, rhyme, anaphora and what Europeans are apt to consider merely verbal conceits.' He further adds that 'if the Persians borrowed their conceits from the Arabs, they bettered the instruction and the reaction of their literary influence tended to confirm the taste of their masters. But it would

36. Al-Sherishi, Sharah Maqamat Hariri p. 15

37. Chomery, Assemblies of Al-Hariri p. 63

38. Sayf, Al-Maqama pp. 71, 78, 79

be a narrow view of the subject to regard such compositions as the Assemblies as the result of literary fashion or scholastic pedantry. The Arabic student cannot but perceive that the language ends itself with regular readiness to responsiveness and parallelism of sound, and that assonance and paranomasia offer themselves almost unbidden.<sup>39</sup>

It is also absolutely evident that Hariri has given more influence to his style than the theme of the *Maqamat*. The stories are meant as a framework of his glorious style of writing. They are not certainly the subject of Hariri, though they present 'the best picture of the society of the city.'<sup>39</sup> At this stage he says 'lexicography was studied with an intention and the consequence was a sort of literary consciousness in everything that was written, a looking to the facts, rather than the substance, which gave an artificial and pedantic character to the productions of the time.'<sup>39</sup> He again states 'that Hamadhani is much less rhetorical than his imitator Hariri. He has less artifice, if less genius, and in his Assemblies the stories of adventure is more dealt upon and less sacrificed to the display of style.'<sup>39</sup> From the above quotation as stated by Thomas Chonery, Hariri's supreme effort lies on his style. Hence it is correct to hold that in his *Maqamat*, adventures and stories are not the main object of their author. What is more essential to be considered is the magnificent mode of composition which is the source of inspiration for its readers.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup>. Chonery, *Assemblies of al-Hariri* pp. 2, 3, 51, etc.

<sup>40</sup>. Omar Farukh, *Al-Rasail* p. 74

Commenting the *Assemblies ingharat*, the well-known commentator namely, Thomas Chenery in his '*Assemblies of al-Hariri*', puts as follows :- It will be readily understood that the rhetorician and the *Hariri* are only put forward to give liveliness to the composition, and that the object of the author is to display his eloquence, his poetical power and his learning. The setting, if it may be called so, of the *Maqamat* is unimportant, the adventure related is often trivial, the diction is all in all.<sup>39</sup>

The art in the *Maqamat* is an art of decoration and the adornment of words, particularly adopted by al-Hariri. This is what is known as enough use of '*Tajid*' and '*Badi*'. Truly, it is al-Hariri who has made the *Maqamat* a new art in the Arabic literature. Those who have imitated the *Maqamat* afterwards, more possibly they are pupils of al-Hariri. Many of them have attempted decoration and ornamentation in their *Maqamat* but none of them could attain the rank held by him except a little.

As cited earlier, Hariri wishes to produce a distinguished and exquisite style of composition, the plot, characters and the stories are of little importance. What is important to him, is to present a unique mode of writing for which the incidence is related. This is why words are given preference to their meaning.

The famous commentator<sup>41</sup> of this time, named al-Sherishi<sup>41</sup> says about his style that Hariri's intention was to give a training to the students, in order to teach them culture and purify their wits so that they could learn experiences of the

---

<sup>41</sup> al-Sherishi, *Sharh Maqamat Hariri* p. 15.

worlds through the accounts of Coruji and also it could increase their knowledge by way of teaching the art of composition in prose and poetry.

The remarks of the author of the popular history, called Al-Fakhri is useful to be related here. Although the said author is proud of his own book, yet he admits the exquisite style of the Maqamat. In the words of E.A. Nicholson, he states as follows :-<sup>42</sup>

'And, again it is more profitable than the Maqamat on which men have set their hearts, and which they eagerly commit to memory; because the reader derives no benefit from Maqamat except familiarity with elegant composition and knowledge of the rules of verse and prose....' Nicholson again states about the Maqamat thus :-

'But of course the celebrity of the work is mainly due to the consummate literary form... a point on which the Arabs have always bestowed singular attention. Hariri himself was a subtle grammarian, living in Iraq, the home of philological sciences; and though he wrote to please rather than to instruct, he seems to have resolved that his work should illustrate every beauty and nicety of which the Arabic language is capable.'<sup>42</sup>

In fact, Hariri has adopted the same style of his predecessor, Al-Hamadhani which was limited in a narrow circle of two characters only, i.e. the awl (Narrator) and the hero. Hence his Maqamat had taken the form of story. But mere story telling was never the object of Hariri. Of course, he wanted

---

<sup>42</sup>. Nicholson, Literary history of the Arabs pp. 331, 336.



to amuse his readers with the accounts of persons like 'Ibu  
Zayd and to display his exquisite literary modes of composition.

As a matter of fact Hariri intends to produce such a  
diction in the Maqamat which could create wonder for his  
contemporaries by external appearance. Sometimes he relies solely  
on literary matters which he handles in some of the Maqamat  
e.g. the unpointed sermon, or a piece of verse just as the  
former or the latter which is read from end to beginning in the  
same way or such verses which only mean gifts. In all these  
writings he shows his remarkable eloquence which frightens his  
contemporaries with his extraordinary wit and genius.

Hariri is not in favour of the complication of the  
plot of story or to deal with several plots in a single story.  
It was also the practice of literary figures of his age. He  
walked on the mid-way and likened his Maqamat with the practice  
of the age, but never at the cost of his theme or style. In spite  
of this he shortened his point or plot in particular Maqamat  
elected light subjects, arranged a single group of characters  
and thereby frees his other Maqamat from these limits and solely  
based on literary matters. According to some critics, 'Abul'ala  
the most celebrated writer of his time seems unable to produce  
a work like Hariri's Maqamat with regard to the latter's  
easiness in writing and reading, graceful and recreation which  
he has created through his famous Maqamat. But so far as the  
lexicon and serious writings are concerned, it is doubtless  
that 'Abul'ala is unequal to anyone of his age and even in next  
decades no such example is found. Though Hariri is also

---

interested in the practice of his time which he has adopted in his Maqamat to some extent, yet he never likes to be deficient from other writers. Thus he achieved superiority to his contemporaries when he uses magical plots, riddles etc. Afterwards he condemned this he it and began to write in a style ~~of~~ which is free from these defects and limits. So he adopted the shortest style of the Arabs of middle ages in order to decorate the Maqamat with several qualities of Dadi'. He has worked hard to beautify his sentences with Zaj' which is the common practice of composition in his age. of course he does it in a different manner because he sometimes brings complications and sometimes the sentence is used completely free from any limitation while sometimes he has used it between two sentences.<sup>43</sup>

Hariri is deeply interested in rhymed prose, decorated with Dadi' and especially with Janna (comparison) But it is done in an entertaining form of writing, which does not burden the least and please all who go through it. He has such an intelligence and vast knowledge of lexicon which filled every corner of his Maqamat. Surprises all who read or listen to them. That is more striking is that of selection of words which are not so effective as are the musical sounds which they create. It appears that various musical instruments are used to create such charming sounds through their words.<sup>43</sup>

Thus his Maqamat stand as a landmark in the history of Arabic rhymed prose, unparalleled by any other age. The beauty of words has <sup>reached</sup> its surmit and all critics and literary

figures stand silently behind him. It is also said that he has continued this unique practice of writing the Maqamat for nine years i.e. from 495 to 504 A.H. His period of nine years is short in view of the fact that Hariri has produced such excellent style of composition to which the scholars of Islamic world have paid due attention.

Hariri has himself in the introduction of the Maqamat clearly stated that he has adorned them with Quranic sentences, glorious metonymy, Arabic maxims, literary matters, grammar, lexicography, fine epistles and sermons. All of them are brought together in such a way that fluency and easiness of composition are affected. He is very sharp in selecting his best words for his Maqamat combined with the elements of recreation and pastime. He has based the style of his Maqamat on conversation which appears at several places e.g. in the Maqamat where Abu Sayd goes to the judge (Qazi) along with his wife or son. Both of them quarrel although they know the reality and demand a decision from him. Again, in the 15th Maqamat, namely, Al-Baghdadiya, Abu Sayd appears in the disguise of an old woman, followed by her children whom she says orphans, weeps for her husband and relatives and thus obtains alms. In Maqamat al-Fooria also, recreation is quite obvious when Harith b. Harman appears as a witness in a marriage rite in which the bride belongs to the Sasanids, the Madicants who were clever and cunning persons. The marriage ceremony is performed by their celebrated leader, namely, Abu Sayd al-Sarufi. The whole Maqamat is full of entertainment and one is bound to laugh when Abu Sayd begins

---

the sermon (Khutba) of marriage. While greeting the newly wedded couple, he refers to zakat (poor tax) and charities which should be given to the poor by rich persons.<sup>44</sup>

There is no doubt, in it that one of the causes of the fame of the Maqamat, is his amusing style which has been greatly admired by his age as well as the ages that have come afterwards. He has not confined himself to the modes of rhymed prose only, but has depicted poetry, quotations and proverbs in which he has amply produced counsels and advices etc.

Thomas Chenery says that 'a still more striking example of artificiality in composition is afforded by these alphabetical pieces, which have raised so much curiosity and discussion among scholars.'<sup>45</sup>

#### (F) DRAMATIC ELEMENTS IN MAQAMAT

So far as the dramatic elements in the Maqamat are concerned, it should be fully understood that they are existing in them and are apparent when one opens any of the Maqamat, whether it is of al-Hamadhani or his imitator, al-Hariri. All the requisite of a drama are found in it, e.g. plot, characters development of its theme, complication, crisis and conclusion. Indeed the model is produced in a literary fashion, which gives sufficient pleasure to the Arabic scholars. But all the happenings of this literary drama is completed with a note of entertainment and amusement. The features of a drama which create horror, wonder, silence, threatening, advising and blessing its

---

<sup>44</sup>. Tayf, Al-Maqamat pp. 72, 78, 79

<sup>45</sup>. Chenery, Assemblies of al-Hariri v. 87

spectators, are nicely depicted. It will be a fault if those who compare this dramatic approach to ~~the~~ the advanced <sup>dramas</sup> ~~times~~ of the present world or with those which are found in other languages at the time when al-Hamadhani or Hariri have composed their Maqamat. No doubt one finds dramas in other languages developing at that time, but in Arabic literature there has been no sign of dramatic literature till the birth of the Maqamat al-Hamadhani. His Maqamat are the first literary approach to the goal of dramas in Arabic. Hence they are the earliest basis for the coming generations. Truly, it is the first attempt made for one of the most distinguished styles of writing at that time, and since then the literary pioneers of the Islamic world have acknowledged its merits. Even the next ages have not produced more lively and pleasant picture of the Maqamat than those of al-Hamadhani and Hariri.

The commentators of al-Hamadhani and Hariri have expressed their view that the Maqama is a classical drama or it is the original effort to the goal of dramas in Arabic prose. But the perfection and superiority of al-Hamadhani and Hariri's Maqamat have led to the attainment of their object forever. No development is made to the achievement of a better Maqama since that time. They are also unable to present a single Maqama equal to the aforesaid Maqamat, what to say of a better or superior Assembly.

According to Thomas Chenery 'the reader will have already gathered that the assembly is a kind of anecdote in the telling of which the author's object is to display his poetry, his eloquence or his learning, and that with this view the subject is continually subordinated to the treatment of it

---

the substance to the form.<sup>46</sup> He again states about its origin in the following words: 'But a full understanding of these compositions and of the two elements of which they consist, namely the rhymed prose and the verse, cannot be obtained without a consideration of the earlier Arabic literature. The origin of poetry among the Arabs, as among other peoples, is lost in obscurity; but there is a general consent that in primitive times there was no poetry, save the verses which each man uttered as he had occasion.... The dramatic and the epic elements are almost wanting.... Nor there are the forms which the poetical diction of the race has taken for itself. The first of these is the rhymed prose, such as makes up the greater part of the Assemblies of Hariri, the other is metrical verse such as Abu Zayd declaims here and there.'<sup>46</sup>

While writing about Al-Hamadani, Nicholson states that 'his Maqamat may be called a romance or literary Bohemianism. In the Maqamat we find some approach to the dramatic style, which has never been cultivated by Semites.'<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, the poetry of the Hebrews and the Arabs are similar to each other because both of them have come from the same foundation, but the dramatic elements found in the Maqamat are not derived from the Semite race. This view is also confirmed by Thomas Chomery where he remarks that 'there is a fundamental relationship between the poetry of the Hebrew and that of the desert tribes; whose intellect was first

---

46. Chomery, Assemblies of al Hariri no. 14, 15

47. Nicholson, Literary history of the Arabs p. 328

awakened 1500 years later. Both the Hebrew and the Arabic poetical literature were built up, we may assume on the common foundation of Semite life.... among both races the original and the primordial type of poetry is the old Semite unmotrical accordance....<sup>48</sup>

Truely, the rhymed prose is well known in the Abbasid dynasty and it has also retained itself in a limited circle since pre-Islamic days, but the credit of inventing a significant of composition i.e. the Maqamat, belongs to al-Hamadhani. Later on, Hariri had produced his peerless work called Maqamat which was esteemed fully by the literary figures of all ages. Hence the original attempt made towards the achievement of dramatic approach is that of al-Hamadhani and then of Al-Hariri respectively.

#### (C) PECULIARITIES OF AL MAQAMAT

As Maqamat are the most outstanding model of composition in Arabic prose, their unique and wonderful mode of writing should be carefully studied. There are several other points which are notable and worthy to be studied minutely and these points make their importance in the circle of literary writers, who have widely appreciated them. In the words of Thomas Chenery 'it will thus be seen that in the Assemblies the highest literary forms of the language are united, Aby Zayd's harangues and sermons are those of the pagan orator or the muslim preacher; Hariri's descriptions are in the rhetorical style which the most accomplished writers imitated from them; the diversified poetry of the

---

<sup>48</sup>. Chenery, Assemblies of al-Hariri pp. 41, 49, 61, 62.

Arabs from the single *rajaz* to the most ornate diction of the *Kasidah*, is represented in Abu Tayy's verses and we have a compendium of all that has established itself in popular favour during many centuries.... We need not wonder, then, that Hariri neglected to change the character of the assemblies as received by him from Hamadhani. Not only did the traditional improviser and Rawi suffice for his contemporaries, but even succeeding imitators have never thought it necessary to add to the persons of the drama.<sup>13</sup>

The main points are again noted below:-

(i) In his *Maqamat* fine words have been used which are classical and noteworthy and have also been found in some reputed compositions. Such words are valuable for the learned figures, hence Hariri has produced them in his work.

However, it is not to be concluded from this, that his intention is strictly to put down a philological treatise. The *Assemblies* (*Maqamat*) are primarily written for entertainment and recreation. Therefore crowds of people have listened to them with pleasure and they have not cared for their hidden meanings. As Hariri has been throughout his literary career highly fond of philological discussions he also wants that his audience should be equally zealous. For this purpose he brings into his work subtleties which were already present in his mind.

(ii) In some respects the *Maqamat* are extremely unclassical, because they introduce provincial expressions and refer to the manners of Iraq. Thus they are far from being restricted to antique words and phrases.

---



(iii) There is a remarkable mixture of old and new materials in the work such as strange and absolute words which make the assemblies glorious in form and singular in substance.

(iv) In his Maqamat, one can easily find the picture of the society in the days of Hariri. He has never neglected to introduce the affairs of his time and bring them into the knowledge of the people who were fully aware of them and were morally debased and corrupted. Some of his Maqamat are particularly based on this subject. The task of the author as a critic and amoral preacher has been marvellously performed by Hariri. The threatening, warning and advising qualities are always represented in the best pleasant manner.

(v) The most elegant style of his composition attracts the eyes of the learned. They are sometimes surprised to notice its beauty and niceties which are untraceable in the whole history of the Arabic prose. The rhymed prose has found its eminent maker in the person of Hariri who had carried it to the peak where nobody except him could reach.

(vi) Last but not the least, are the literary and linguistic qualities which are prized. According to Gibb, "From the very first Hariri's Maqamat were regarded as incomparable. But he claimed them as a miracle, says one Biographer, 'not one could have been found to reject the claim.... but the infinite allusions to all branches of learning and all sides of life have rendered them a monument of erudition. Nor it is merely their formal perfection, the

---

mastership of the language, the endless pseudo-deep and erudite obscurities that have gained for it its privileged position. Hariri has had many successors whose linguistic attainments, though perhaps little inferior to his, have not preserved their work from oblivion.<sup>49</sup>

Chenery says 'for more than seven centuries this work has been esteemed as, next to the Koran, the chief treasure of the Arabic tongue.'<sup>50</sup>

(H) THEMES OF HIS MAQAMAT

Hariri like his predecessor, Al-Hamadhani has attempted various subjects in his Maqamat, e.g. literary, juristic, bravery, concerning wine or ecstasy in love etc. All these subjects are related by Hariri on a particular pattern. His Maqamat are sometimes lengthy and sometimes brief, but each Maqama stands on its own feet i.e. on its own story. There is no union between one Maqama and the other except this that the compiler, the narrator and the hero (mutakib) are the same person in each Maqama.<sup>51</sup>

The theme of his Maqamat is nothing but begging and mendicancy and in this respect he is more accomplished than his master Al-Hamadhani, whose Maqamat also circle on this particular theme along with other subjects. Of course, Hariri has introduced all these subjects in a very intelligent form and has always presented Abu Fayd as an expert 'alib.<sup>52</sup>

49. Gibb, Arabic Literature, pp. 88, 89  
50. Chenery, Assemblies of 'Al Hariri p. 2  
51. Umar Farukh, Al-Rasa'il p. 23  
52. Fayf, al-Maqama pp. 56 to 59.

If one tries to see his 'aqamat carefully, he will find that Hariri has made begging only an external appearance for his 'aqamat. There are several other subjects dealt in the 'Assemblies in which Badit' and such other qualities are shown. Some of these qualities are common in the 'aqamat Hariri and Al-Hamadani. For instance, sermon is common to both of them. Al-Hamadani has presented his hero, Abdul Fath al-Ashanderi preaching in two of his 'aqamat, but Hariri has produced Abu 'ayd as a preacher in ten of the 'aqamat, e.g. such sermons are delivered in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 41st, 48th and 50 'aqamat. All of them incite people to do good and hate those who have engaged themselves in the activities of this world, because he recites consequences of the last day of judgment which is soon to come. In some other 'aqamat there are also pieces concerning sermons, probably, the master-piece is found in the 12th 'aqamat, namely, Al-Bamichia in which Abu 'ayd has delivered a sermon before a <sup>50</sup>caffa.

In fact, Hariri pleases himself through the sermons described in these 'aqamat as well as by his magnificent style and elegant narrages. In the days of Hariri, people are soon religious minded, have prayed God to relieve them from troubles and cruelties of the then Governor who were much oppressed and whose administration and other affairs were paralysed. So they have prayed God to help them in war against the Christians who had prepared themselves to take vengeance against the Muslims. A large number of them have practised mysticism for gifts bestowed by God and have left everything which was

---

in their own possession, and which were the cause of their pains. In these circumstances, one can easily appreciate his sermons, prayers and counsels which are highly admired by the learned men and scholars.

The next theme of the Maqamat is literary grandeur which does not depict their social life, but sometimes oratorical points. Hariri is expert in this particular style of composition hence he has displayed not only his fine oratory, decorated with 'raj' and 'badf', but also application of a sentence in all linguistic ways in which it could be used. Hariri has not left any gap to be filled in by his later writers, nor they have got any place in their writings to make some addition which could be deemed as original. For example, in his 12th Maqama, he has presented this literary quality in a thorough manner which contains several innovations.

One of the glaring instances of this playful art is depicted in the 6th Maqama, when 'bu Sayf' appears before the literary figures in the city of 'Maragha' and intends to surprise them by his wonderful style. For this purpose he distributes a letter amongst them in which one word is pointed and the other unpointed.<sup>53</sup>

Afterwards Hariri has given in this model of composition and has begun to originate a new mode of writing.

Thus in the 18th Maqama named 'al-farabiya' he has made words which might be read straightly or vice versa without any alteration. It clearly shows superiority of Hariri among his contemporaries and next writers of the Maqamat. It is a little change and

---

53. Sayf, al-Maqama no. 59 to 62, 63 to 67.

style is again, practised in the 17th 'aqama called al-  
shar'aa. In this 'aqama, he has composed a letter or oratio  
whose sentences can be read like also from right to left as  
letters and books are studied; secondly, one can read it from  
left to right (i.e. vice versa). It is certainly a collection  
of maxims which is based on hundred sentences.<sup>53</sup>

In the 26th 'aqama Al-Ragaa, he has pointed and  
unpointed Huruf (or letters) alternately. Sometimes he has  
shown this style in prose and sometimes in poetry. It seems  
that he has kept a large number of words at his pleasure when  
he puts in wherever he pleases.<sup>53</sup>

In the 28th 'aqama called al-Tamarqandiya, he has  
again displayed his charm of writing in the very style in  
which he has generally written i.e. ~~writing~~ sentences in which  
all words are unpointed. Here the word stands on the right  
of a mosque, begins, to deliver a khutba (sermon) and brings  
out all unpointed words. It appears that he wants to give  
popularity to his mode of writing through his 'aqamat. As a  
matter of fact, it is his intention to compose his 'aqamat on  
a unique pattern. To achieve this object he has filled his  
'aqamat with wonderful sermons. Perhaps he wishes to obtain  
superiority to the well known preacher of Sayf al-'Auli,  
namely, ~~the~~ Khutaba. Hence he has applied 'aj' and 'ad' as  
well as main philological words i.e. words or sentences that  
are unpointed.<sup>53</sup>

In the sermon of Friday prayer as well as in the  
sermon delivered on the occasion of a military ceremony,

---

Hariri has practised this style, he has composed sermons for the former and short sermons for the latter.<sup>53</sup>

In Maqama Al-Mustosa, he has used all unpainted words, but in the 46th Maqama, Al-Malbia, he has presented a new model of poetry in which some words are painted and others are unpainted. Again he is not satisfied with it and has produced some other kinds e.g. similarity in writing of words, (i.e. Tajneess al-Thattifad al-Yalamat). Besides, there are other qualities which are apparent in his Maqamat. But in dealing with all literary matters, he shows his skill and versatility with excellently. His strange numerical exercises, oratorical pieces full of points and resemblance create wonder for the readers. It seems that his object of compilation is to exhibit artistic qualities or perhaps it has been the theme of his Maqamat which is noticeable in the 19th, 27th, 40th and 47th Maqamat. He has always presented good and pleasant lessons to his audience instead of dull and uninteresting matters. One of the best examples of this literary achievement is 25th Maqama which is called Al-Shetria. Under this Maqama he collected his 100 verses and one can easily read them in the form of 100 lines.<sup>54</sup>

Undoubtedly, Hariri has related those subjects in his Maqamat and has intended to produce all literary qualities through them. Most probably this is his real theme in compilation of the Maqamat, while Abu Rayn is only a means to narrate them in the most accomplished manner.

In the time of Hariri, riddles were commonly used. All

---

literary men appear to be accustomed to them by using them in sentences and qualities of things. Thus, they have tested the intelligence of their listeners and have judged their presence of mind. Hariri probably for this purpose has collected riddles chiefly in his 3 Maqamat and they are 31st, 32nd and 33rd of the Maqamat. Through these riddles he has revealed hidden meanings and has tested those who were unaware of them. He has himself explained their meanings in the text of the Maqamat and has described them below the text in order to let them understand fully.

Likewise, Hariri has related Grammar and Jurisprudence in three separate Maqamat. The first is Grammar which is narrated in Maqama 24th and is called Al-Qutub in which he has disclosed twelve problems of Grammar. The second is Jurisprudence which is stated in two Maqamat. They are 15th and 32nd of the Maqamat. The former is called al-Furqan, in which he relates about inheritance etc. The latter is named after Al-Taiba which refers to Taiba i.e. Moslems. In this Maqama he has collected hundred problems of jurisprudence with their answers and explanations. In his questions to play a trick for lexicography. He uses a word whose meaning is well-known but he uses with it an unknown meaning in lexicon and thus pleases his reader and gives him a vast knowledge of lexicography. This particular object (lexicography) is also produced in other themes, e.g. in Maqama al-Annabiya, where he relates about a rich man of Iraq in his age, namely, Ismail al-Madani, or he describes the cruelty committed by the then Governors, or he

---

describes the cruelty committed in their markets, or so gives a picture of some markets and their habits prevalent at the time, or relates about those who declare themselves religious but secretly they have adopted foul and unfair methods. All these themes are limited in scope, because the chief aim of their producer is to show his skill in lexicography and philology.<sup>55</sup>

According to Chenery 'Lexicography is treated with an intentness and the consequence is a sort of literary consciousness in everything that is written, a liking to the form, rather than the substance, which gives an artificial and pedantic to the productions of the time.<sup>56</sup>

Farisi has himself stated about his composition of the 'Asnamat in the preface of his work. They are as follows:  
"And composed, inspired of such a powerful and strong genius, and firm intelligence, and solid judgment, and afflicting cares, fifty assemblies, consisting of what is serious in language and lively, what is delicate in expression and dignified; the brilliancies of eloquence and its pearls, the beauties of scholarship and its varieties:- Besides what I have adorned them with of Arab proverbs and scholarly ologisms, and grammatical riddles, and decisions dependent on the meaning of words, and original allusions, and ornate oratorics, and tear-moving exhortations, and rustic jests."<sup>57</sup>

Thus he praises his assemblies and relates too all peculiarities which have been customary at the time of literary

---

54. Chenery, Assemblies of al-Farisi pp 105, 106



pioneers of the Arabic Literature.

In the words of Arbuthnot 'it contains a large portion of the language spoken by the Arabs of the desert, such as its idioms, its proverb<sup>55</sup> and subtle delicacies of expression; hence, as he states 'Poets, historians, grammarians and lexicographers look upon the 'Inqamāt (here blues or 'qanqas) as the highest authority, and next to the Koran, as far at least as language is concerned.'<sup>55</sup> Further he says that... 'according to Ibn Khallikan, any person who acquires a sufficient acquaintance with this book to understand it rightly will be led to acknowledge the eminent merit of the author, his extensive information, and his vast abilities.'<sup>55</sup>

Gibb states about the merits of the 'Inqamāt in the following words:-

"From the very first Pariri's 'Inqamāt were regarded as incomparable; 'Had he claimed them as a miracle', says one Biographer, 'not one would have been found to reject the claim; it is chiefly for their literary and linguistic qualities that they are prized, the infinite allusions to all branches of learning and all sides of life have rendered them a monument of erudition. Nor is it merely their formal perfection, the mastery of language, the endless tours de force and cunning observations that have gained for it its privileged position.'<sup>56</sup>

Again the remarks by the ruler of 'I-Ishkharī on the 'Inqamāt are worthy to be noted down. They are the following:

---

55. Arbuthnot, Arabic Authors, pp. 17.

56. Gibb, Arabic literature, p. 80

"..... Because the reader derives no benefit from  
"naqat except familiarity with elegant composition  
and knowledge of the rules of verse and prose.

Undoubtedly they contain maxims and ingenious devices  
and experiences; but all this has a blinding effect on  
the mind, for it is founded on begging, and straining  
and disgraceful scheming to acquire a for- victory  
pence. Therefore, if they do good in one direction,  
they do harm in another; and this point has been  
noticed by some critics of the "naqat of Farisi and  
Badi' al-Zaman.<sup>57</sup>

It is not necessary to agree with the opinion of the  
writer of al-Fakhri, when he severely criticises al-Faradhi  
and Farisi alleging that their "naqat are based on immorality  
and vulgarity. The obvious reason of his condemning both the  
distinguished writers and their works, is, that he does his  
own historical work named al-Fakhri more associated than their  
compositions, because he says himself about his work thus:-  
'It is more profitable than the "naqat on which they set  
their hearts.' In fact the writer of al-Fakhri as well as some  
other critics who have deliberately ridiculed the "naqat, fully  
know about their merits and demerits. And as they could not  
compare their work with the "naqat, prejudice has compelled  
them to raise false allegations against the "naqat. But their  
charge could not be upheld by the court of literary circle and  
both writers of the "naqat namely al-Faradhi and al-Farisi  
are esteemed as predecessor and imitator respectively among the  
learned persons of the Arab world.

---

57. Nicholson, Literary history of the Arabs, pp 330, 331

It is already stated that whatever one finds in *Qabasat* or immoral in their *Maqamat*, it is only for the object of presenting a true picture of the society in the days of their writers. Thus they desire to teach their people good conduct by means of entertainment and recreation. The conclusion that the people would commit more faults after studying the *Maqamat*, is perhaps not justified, because the purpose of a writer is not merely to describe matters without interest, but also to put them in a pleasing way. Having this view in their mind al-Hamadhani and Hariri have composed their works and produced them in the best polished form.

Al-Sherishi, one of the accomplished commentators on Hariri remarks that the outward appearance of the *Maqamat* is mistaken, because his real object is to give a training to the student, to teach him culture and to purify his mind from experience of the world through the accounts of *Faraji*, and also to become conscious from ensuing worries. Thus he can face them and become aware of his ignorant and defective mind, and which can also add to his learning by teaching him the art of composition in prose and poetry.

#### A GLANCE IN HIS *MAQAMAT*<sup>59, 60, 61</sup>

In his first Assembly called 'of *San'a*' (i.e. *San'a* in Yemen) Harith arrives therein and one poverty, encounters a crowd which is gathered round a preacher; then he and his

---

58. Al-Sherishi, *Sharah Maqamat Hariri* p. 15

59. Chenery, *Assemblies of al-Hariri* pp. 108, 112, 117, 121, 126, 132

60. Chenery, *Assemblies of Al-Hariri* pp. 139, 150, 151, 158, 163, 168, 176, 181, 194, 200, 206, 211, 215.

61. Chenery, *Assemblies of al-Hariri* pp. 200, 223, 229, 234, 243, 253, 258 Vol. I.

... against self-indulgence, and against ...  
but he does not put it into practice as the sequel ...

In his second Assembly named 'of ...' ...  
us a picture of a meeting in which the ... of a  
great poet with high admiration. The ... and ... of  
the ... were, indeed, a great contribution for ...  
the genius of their common.

... in this ... of ...  
he ... to ... Harith, thus goes to ... a term of  
... for joining the society of ... ...  
an interval he ... in the ... of ...  
among a crowd of dilettanti ... the ... of  
the popular poets, ... his ...  
recites verses full of rhetorical ...  
Harith recognises him, he recites some verses on the fickleness  
of his fortune.

In the 3rd Assembly named 'of ...' ...  
the company of scholars, ...  
he recited his poetry in a ... and ...  
style. Harith, then, offers a dinner for his ... and when he  
gives another dinner for his ...  
recognised by Harith, he recites some verses in his defence.

In the 4th Assembly called 'of ...' Harith hears a  
discourse on duty between ... and ...  
his son, towards a neighbour. The ...  
fiction. Harith, in the end is ...  
... and his so-called ...  
... even though they had ...

---

adjacent village. But what a good piece of writing Abu Tayd leaves on the saddle which meant separation after noon.

In the 5th Assembly 'of Rufe' Harith passes a night with friends at Rufe. Here Abu Tayd obtains money from the generous scholars. When Harith recognizes him, he relates a false story about his misfortune and seeks his help in order to cash the cheques he has received. Shortly, Harith comes to know the truth that he has neither wife nor son and the whole story is fabricated and it is only a trick to obtain money.

In the 6th Assembly 'of Shiraz' (in Aderbijan) Harith finds himself in the company of literary men including Abu Tayd, who was lamenting the decline of learning. Abu Tayd delivers an address in which doctors are pointed and upbraided and further he says that he has been offered the post of Public Writer by the Governor but he declined to accept it arguing that freedom is better than dependence.

In the 7th Assembly 'of Shiraz' Harith goes to public prayer. An old man (Abu Tayd) appears in disguise with an old woman, who distributes loaflets. Harith offers her a dirham and desires to know the name of its author. When they are invited by Harith at his place, where Abu Tayd is soon without blindness and soon after both of them disappear, after sending Harith to fetch alkali to wash his hands.

In the 8th Assembly 'of Shiraz' Abu Tayd and a youth appear before a qazi of Shiraz. Both of them complain against each other. The qazi bestows a bribe on both and they depart. Later on he comes to know that the complaints are false. The old man who is Abu Tayd and the youth are thereby arrested. He pardons them and dismisses with a caution.

---

In the 9th Assembly 'of Alexandria' Abu 'ayd's wife appears with her husband and accuses him of carrying her on false pretences. The defendant old man admits his voracity in elegant verses and also that he has sold his wife's effects but denies to deceive her. The Qazi having accepted the excuse given alms and they depart. Afterwards, Harith discovers that it is Abu 'ayd who is singing and dancing with joy. The Qazi then treats the affairs as a jest.

In the 10th Assembly 'of Rahbah' Abu 'ayd alleges before the Governor that the youth whom he has taken before him, has killed his own son, hence he demands his punishment. The Governor, being characterless and immoral, winks the accused boy himself in lieu of a purse to satisfy the prosecutor. But both of them leave the Governor disappointed and dishonoured him with satirical verses.

In the 11th Assembly 'of Natch' Abu 'ayd gives an elaborate sermon on certainty of death and last day of judgment wealth and power etc. in rhymed prose and in a few verses. This magnificent hymn is unsurpassed. Harith becomes indignant for Abu 'ayd receives abundant alms with hypocrisy.

In the 12th Assembly 'of Damascus' while Harith is on his way to Damascus, he is in need of an escort to protect the caravan from robbers. Thereby a dervish (Abu 'ayd) guarantees him for safe travelling through his magical words and gets rewards. The said dervish is seen drinking wine by Harith, who feels shock by it. The old man then recites verses and Harith leaves the wine shop with sorrow.

---

In the 13th Assembly 'of Begged' Abu Sayd disguised as an old man is followed by some lean and feeble children. Thus he obtains alms through his address and verses. Harith discovers later that he is Abu Sayd, the impostor.

In the 14th Assembly 'of Raced' Abu Sayd and his son appear seeking relief through their representations and verses. No knavery is mentioned in this Assembly.

In the 15th Assembly 'the Logical' a very ordinary logical puzzle is introduced about the heirs to certain property by Abu Sayd, who relates it in a long story and then gives a solution of the puzzle. Sherishi says that Hariri 'is so long as to weary the hearer.'

In the 16th Assembly 'of the Trick' Abu Sayd exhibits an extraordinary feat of scholarship in reciting lines of poetry, each of which may be read forward and backward without any change in their meaning. Harith introduces him to his friends who invite him to spend the night for chatting. 'Abu Sayd' pleads his children are hungry and assures them forthwith sustenance but he does not return.

In the 17th Assembly 'the Reversed' the words being themselves reversed, produce a perfect sense. It clearly resembles the 16th Assembly.

In the 18th Assembly 'of the Singer' Abu Sayd gives a splendid show of his arts through the narrative of an alleged misfortune. This Assembly is the last poetical in Hariri's work. 'Abu Sayd' attends a wedding feast, sees a vase of sweetmeats and quits the place saying that he has taken an oath not to remain near transparent things. Later he relates a false story of a

---

beautiful maiden, who is required by the Governor for his prince. The said Governor takes her by force on which Abu Sayd has vowed not to remain in the company of those who would reveal a secret.

In the 19th Assembly 'of Nasibin' Hariri shows his knowledge of Toofayli jargon. The story is of the usual simplicity. Abu Sayd passes his life at Nasibin in 'Ayar Nabiah falls ill seriously, his friends attend him and then in the enigmatical language of Toofayli he tells his son to bring a repast for them. Away from the functions of his agalliriri gives food names of various kinds compounded with 'bu' and 'en' etc.

In the 20th Assembly 'of Nayyafarikin' Abu Sayd laments the decay of his health, under the semblance of a mighty hero and seeks the bounty of his company to provide a shroud for him.

In the 21st Assembly 'of Nayy' Abu Sayd preaches a sermon on life and morality. Afterwards he gives another discourse in reproof of the Governor. The latter repents, restores to him justice, and rewards the preacher.

In the 22nd Assembly 'of the Suphrates' Abu Sayd in a shabby garb shows his eloquence by a rhetorical address on the comparative merits of secretaries and accountants. He leaves the place in anger because they were judging his merits by appearance. He recites verses on their folly and wisdom.

In the 23rd Assembly 'of the Precinct' Abu Sayd shows his skill in artificial composition, takes his son before the Governor or the criminal judge, accusing him for the theft of 2/3 rd of a copy of his verses and the Governor tells him to recite those verses. The boy lent a true ear and the Governor bids them to reconcile. Abu Sayd pleads his poverty and the Governor relieves their necessities. Then it is discovered that he is duped.

---



In the 24th Assembly 'of the Portion' Grammatical riddles and disquisitions are related. 'Abu 'Ayd in the company of learned men at Baghdad gives his opinion by submitting twelve enigmas, involving obscure and technical points of Arabic grammar. 'Abu 'Ayd takes gifts and explains these points. Later he leaves the company without taking a drink.

In the 25th Assembly 'of Farth' Farith finds an old man who is 'Abu 'Ayd, naked and shivering on the ground surrounded by a crowd. The old man recites verses on his misfortune and misery. The rich offer him their furs and cloaks. Farith also gives him a garment. Further 'Abu 'Ayd explains the phrase 'the Kafe of winter' which means that a winter may be passed in comfort.

In the 26th Assembly 'the spotted' 'Abu 'Ayd entertains Farith and finally explains how he is rewarded for an eulogistic composition in which the alternate letters are pointed and unpointed.

In this Assembly Farith is shown in priority, on whom a wealthy man who is 'Abu 'Ayd bestows a life garment. 'Abu 'Ayd tells him that the cause of his sudden prosperity is an eloquent composition for which the Governor of the has loaded him with presents.<sup>61</sup>

In the 27th Assembly 'of the one hundred' Farith presents a story about the lost carol for which a search is made. The story is full of interest and charm.<sup>62</sup>

In the 28th Assembly 'of the hundred' 'Abu 'Ayd delivers a sermon the instability of human destinies and certainty of death. His verses in this assembly are excellent in form and substance.

In the 29th Assembly 'of baht' Fariri produces an amusing story through Abu Tayd. The story is full of imaginative and original language. In the end, there is a proposal for marriage. Before the wedding takes place, Abu Tayd delivers a wonderful and marvelous address.

In the 30th Assembly 'of sur' Fariri relates an adventure near Cairo at a marriage time. Here Abu Tayd delivers a discourse on the duties of the rich towards the poor and also on the heavenly purpose in establishing the institution of matrimony.

In the 31st Assembly 'of ramlan' Abu Tayd preaches on the duties of true religion at Mecca. It is a composition of exquisite beauty which displays Fariri's vast learning in 'raj' and 'badi'.

In the 32nd Assembly 'of rayban' Abu Tayd appears on the stage as a Mufti, who answers various questions on theological and legal points. It is one of the most elaborate, important longest and difficult of the Assemblies.

In the 33rd Assembly 'of filip' Abu Tayd assumes the character of a mendicant, who is afflicted with 'aley'. He appeals eloquently to the audience and obtains a liberal supply of alms.

In the 34th Assembly 'of rahid' Fariri tells a peculiar story in which Farith purchases a slave from Abu Tayd, who appears as a slave merchant, sells to his son. The boy communicates the sale protesting that it is unjust. And they leave for the court of Qazi.

---

In the 35th Assembly 'of Shiraz' Hariri relates one of the most interesting subjects of his age. The historians have unanimously declared that drinking was prevalent in the capital, Baghdad. Even the courts of the Abbasid Emperors adopted it as a mark of fashion. Thus people also followed the same course. Here Abu Sayd describes a wine-drink metaphorically under the simile of a maiden for whom he desires to purchase a wedding attire.

In the 36th Assembly 'of Multizah' Abu Sayd pronounces twenty riddles of curious nature and does not explain them. In the end Hariri does this in a short commentary.

In the 37th Assembly 'of Maidan' Abu Sayd and his so-called son appear before the Qazi and relate their dispute before him.

In the 38th Assembly 'of Fary' Abu Sayd addresses an address to the Governor of Fary in some very fine verses. In these verses, he praises liberality to men of genius. Hariri has excellently showed his rhetorical expression in the said verses.

In the 39th Assembly 'of Qasr' Hariri gives a picture of a sea voyage and a magic spell against the dangers of the sea. In this assembly he produces very nicely the scenery of the sea along with its natural beauties, horrors and terrors of a storm etc.

In the 40th Assembly 'of Tebriz' Hariri produces a lively altercation between Abu Sayd and his young wife before the Qazi of Tebriz. While Abu Sayd complains of her contumacy, she alleges him for his abuse of conjugal rights.

In the 41st Assembly 'of Tanis' Abu Sayd reads as a sermon, which is full of lofty morals, admonitions etc. It

---

clearly shows Hariri's powerful art of composition in rhymed prose and rhetorical poetry.

In the 42nd Assembly 'of Najran' Abu Sayd again produces a series of riddles as in the former Maqama, which is 36th Maqama namely 'of Halcilyah'.

In the 43rd Assembly 'Al-Bakriyah' Hariri displays his mastery and eloquence of the Arabic tongue in various ways through Abu Sayd. The discussion between him and a youth on the subject of marriage is worthy of careful consideration.

In the 44th Assembly 'the entry' Abu Sayd makes a number of <sup>amazing</sup> statements. They reveal double meaning and curious subtleties of the Arabic language. In the end he leaves secretly without explaining them.

In the 45th Assembly 'of Amiah' Hariri produces an account of another matrimonial dispute between Abu Sayd and his young wife. Both of them appear before the Imam of Amiah.

In the 46th Assembly 'of Aleppo' the hero of the Maqamat namely, Abu Sayd assumes the character of a school master. His pupils accomplish the most surprising feats in linguistic artifices.

In the 47th Assembly 'of Hajr' Abu Sayd in the character of a customer appears and soon an altercation takes place between him and his son. Thus Abu Sayd obtains money from the congregation.

In the 48th Assembly 'the Haranigah' Hariri's son Abu Qasim Abdullah relates about Abu Sayd-al-Taraji, the comrade in the mosque of Banu Haram and he relates a wonderful story of himself, which is the basis for the composition of the Maqamat

---

al-Hariri, according to the above said son of Hariri and some other writers, it is supposed to be the finest Assembly composed by Hariri in which Abu Tayd appears for the first time on the stage.<sup>62, 64</sup>

In the 19th Assembly 'of Rasan' Abu Tayd urges his son to practice mendicancy as a fine art. He has practiced it and has earned a lot of wealth. This is one of the most interesting discourses of the Maqamat. Chenery says that it is 'one of the finest pieces of rhetoric in the work.'<sup>62</sup>

In the 50th Assembly 'of Mara' Hariri describes the repentance of Abu Tayd with a magnificent praise of Mara. His farewell verses are most interesting to breathe the purest spirit of devotion. Chenery states, 'but perhaps the first place in regard of merit should be given to the 50th and last Assembly.'<sup>62</sup>

Chenery furthermore remarks that 'In his last Assembly, Hariri celebrating the festival of his native city says of 'your member was he who originated Grammar (or syntax) etc. Nowhere there were so many commentators, rhetoricians, grammarians.... each vying to surpass the other in subtlety of analysis....' The Assemblies of Hariri are themselves, the best picture of the society of the city. Whenever he may place the scene of the adventure, it is always Mara that he has in his mind <sup>and the</sup> dilettanti of Mara whose taste he shares or improves. It can not, from its geographical position, a place of wealth and refinement.'<sup>63, 64</sup>

---

63. Chenery, Assemblies of al-Hariri, p. 200.

64. Ibn Khallikan, Tafayut.... p. 227.

Again, "in the second 'assembly' he says 'Hariri gives  
us a picture of one of these meetings, in which the poorest  
conceits of a poet meet with high admiration. The habits and  
tastes of the Basrians had, therefore, doubtless, a great  
share in directing the genius of their townsmen."<sup>63</sup>

---

Chapter IV

A CATALOGUE OF ALL KNOWN TITLES OF ARABIC LITERATURE IN ARABIC

PERIOD AND PLACE OF ORIGIN

Hariri is not the first person who has initiated modern literature in composition of the Maqamat. There are also a large number of imitators before Hariri as well as after the Maqamat produced by Hariri. In the following pages an attempt has been made to note down all writers of the Maqamat during the Abbasid period and their works.

1. Abu Hurr, Abdul Aziz b. Umar al-Fahiri has written a Maqamat on the same pattern of al-Hamdhani, but it has not achieved fame in the circle of literary men. He died in the year 405 A.H.<sup>1,2</sup>

2. Abdul Rahman Abdullah b. Muhammad b. Razi has composed nine Maqamat in Baghdad in 430 A.H. He was born in 410 A.H. and died in 465 A.H. He was a resident of Baghdad, a poet and a philologist. One who reads his Maqamat, he thinks that we have in al-Hamdhani. But the fact is that in Maqamat there are many persons and in several of his Maqamat he has taken the chief theme. Instead, there is no glory of the style and form in Maqamat al-Hamdhani and Hariri. Probably this is the reason why it has not achieved popularity. His Maqamat are of a different nature. But they have no fascinating qualities for their readers. His style of writing is plain and simple but not charming. The Maqamat do not bear the name of cities such as one sees in Maqamat al-Hamdhani and Hariri. His style is very own difficult and unfamiliar to the reader.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Sayf, al-Maqamat p. 81

2. Brockelmann, Encyclopedia of Islam II 161, 162

3. Maqamat al-Hamdhani - a text p. 5, 6, 153

The compiler of the catalogue *har al-Kutub al-Hiyya* states that Ibn Ragia has composed eight *maqamat* in which he has related about poets, wise men and their counsel, through the medium of animals, for pleasing the people. He has cited his first *Maqama* namely, *Al-Habashia* and he has explained the meanings of some words in the end of each *Maqama*. Ibn Ragia has himself remarked after the introduction of his *Maqamat* that he has decorated the contents of the stories and accounts and adorned their words and meaning.

The compiler of the catalogue, *al-Makhtutat-al-Muawana*, states that Ibn Ragia is also called *Waqia*. He has composed ten *Maqamat*. (This copy was written in 526 A.H.)

3. MAQAMAT IBN BASSAM : died in 303 A.H.

Ibn Bassam has composed his *Maqamat* with *Abu Hammad Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Chaharmiri*. They are 30 in number.<sup>6</sup>

4. MAQAMAT AL-SULUB : 20 are composed by *Abi Ja'far al-Mu'iri al-Suofi*, who died in 295 A.H.<sup>6</sup>

5. MAQAMAT AL-AULIA : By *Abu Abd al-Ahman al-Mu'iri*, who died in 413 A.H.<sup>6</sup>

6. MAQAMAT IBN SHARF AL-QANARI : 20 are by *Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Sharf b. Sa'ad b. Ahmed al-Qanari al-Jisami*, who died in 463 A.H. The said *Maqama* is composed about the reputed poets.<sup>5</sup>

7. MAQAMAT AL-MAWA'IN - MAQAMAT AL-MAWA'IN : They are composed by the celebrated writer *Abu Hammad*

---

4. *Fahris al-Kutub al-Arabia* no. 360-77

5. *Fahris al-Makhtutat* no. 530, 531

6. *Haji Khalifa, KEF al-Tunus* no. 177-20



Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Qasrabi, who passed away in 505 = 1101 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

8. MAQAMAT AL-'UTAMA BAYN YADI AL-SHABA : By Abdul Tarim al-Sam'ani, who died in 562 A.H. = 1167 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

9. MAQAMAT AL-SARGOSTIA : By Abu al-Tahir Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Sargosti, who died in 555 A.H. = 1165 A.D. He is a Spaniard, who seems to have come nearer to Jariri in his Maqamat. He has composed 50 Maqamat with utmost effort and they have contained prose and poetry both. He has selected Mundir b. Harman as its narrator, and 'Alib b. Harman is too here. Now these Maqamat have vanished from the face of the world.<sup>2,5</sup>

H.B. (9) Maqamat al-Sargostia al-Turjuma : they are famous Assemblies and are compiled by Sheikh Jassidun, who died in 538 A.H. They are 50 in number.<sup>6</sup>

(9) AL-MAQAMAT AL-TURJUMA : By 'Abi al-Tahir Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Tamimi al-Sargostia al-Andalusia, who died in 550 A.H. They are 50 in number which he has composed at Cordoba.<sup>7</sup>

(9) AL-MAQAMAT AL-SARGOSTIA : By 'Abu al-Tahir Muhammad b. Yusuf Ashtarkooni, Andalusia, who died in 555 A.H. = 1165 A.D. in Cordova and seems to have come nearer to Jariri in his Maqamat. He has also set the classical number of 50.<sup>8</sup>

10. MAQAMAT AL-TAMIMI <sup>7,8,9,10,11</sup> : by 'Abi 'Asim Muhammad

7. Fehris al-Mashrutat pp 529-32

8. Brockelmann Encyclopaedia of Islam pp 162-64

9. 'Asf al-Maqamat pp. 81 etc.

10. Fehris al-Tutub al-Arabia pp. 368-77

11. Maqamat al-Tamimshahari, Cairo 1312.

b. Umar b. Muhammad b. Umar al-Zuhairi, entitled with 'Jar-  
al-Allah'. He was born in 462 or 467 A.H. at Tadmor and  
died in 538 A.H. He has composed 50 Maqamat, based on religious  
themes, full of admonition and rhetorical modes. He has  
commenced his Maqamat in the same conventional way as al-  
Hamadhani and Hariri have adopted. He has addressed the words  
'Ya Abul Kasim', but he has not adopted the very style of his  
contemporaries saying as 'Haddathna'. The names of his  
Maqamat refer to some virtues, that are essential to be found  
except a few Maqamat which contain other themes such as the  
Maqama on Grammar, or metres ('Uruz) or rhyme ('arafi) or the  
Days of the Arabs (battle days). The central idea lying into  
them is to talk on the track of Justice, Rightness, Worthi-  
ness, Peace, Veracity, etc.

It seems that he has intended to compose his Maqamat  
on a theme which is new as well as lacking in the society of  
his age. Thus his religious discourses are of a great help  
to compose himself and others. His Maqamat do not own strange  
stories based on begging or mendicancy as his predecessors  
have done. He is just on the reverse side addressing his  
audience in a religious tone, full of religious themes and  
with great faith in God. Indeed, all his Maqamat show  
religious teachings in which there is no matter or hero, but  
addresses himself plainly recalling the last day of Judgment,  
doing good deeds in this earthly existence and fearing his  
bad deeds or actions which one has committed.

It also seems that he does not want to imitate  
Hariri, as he has admired Hariri's abilities in his two  
verses declaring that none has excelled his Maqamat. Truly

---

he has borrowed the name of Maqamat for the purpose of naming his own collection of sermons.

11. MAQAMAT AL-SUFIA : By Shuhab al-Din al-Sahrwardi, who died in 587 A.H. = 1191 A.D. According to Brockelmann 'It is doubtful whether this Maqamat which deal with mystic terminology belongs to this class at all.'<sup>12,13</sup>

12. AL MAQAMATI - By Al-Jassan b. Saifi al-Hari, entitled with 'Malik al-Nahat', which means King of Grammarians. He died in 568 A.H. He has stated that he has written truth and virtue in his Maqamat while Hariri has put falsehood and worthless matters. But the fact is, that there is a vast difference between the two Maqamat. Hariri's fascinating style is quite unknown to all writers of the Maqamat.<sup>14</sup>

13. MAQAMAT AL-JAWIDAYIL MA'ALI AL-SUFIA : By Abul Farg Jassan al-Din Abdur Rahman b. Ali b. Muhammad b. Ali b. Abdullah, who is well known with the name 'Ibn al-Jawid' of Bagdad. He expired in the year 597 A.H. = 1200 A.D. He has composed 50 Maqamat on the pattern of Hariri. They all contain literary theme at different places just as the Maqamat of al-Hariri al-Basri.<sup>13,15</sup>

Brockelmann states that he (Ibn al-Jawid) 'himself provided with a lexicographical commentary, are certainly modelled on those of Hariri.'<sup>12</sup> In the booklet namely, Al-Maqama, it is related that Ibn al-Jawid has composed 50

12. Brockelmann encyclopaedia of Islam II, 162-6

13. Fehris al-Makhtutat II, 193, 529-30

14. Haji Khalifa, Khasfel-Munim II, 177-97

15. Fehris al-Kutub al-Arabia II, 36-77

Maqamat on various literary subjects. He has also adopted the same style of al-Ramadhani and has adopted the method of delivering sermons in his Maqamat.<sup>16</sup>

14. AL-MAGHAIYA ALA TADARRIJA : By Abul Abbas Yahya b. Sa'eed b. Hariri, who was a Christian physician died in 539 A.H. = 1193 A.D. His Maqamat are known as Maqamat al-Maghaiya. Yaqut in his celebrated work namely Mu'jam al-Udaba, has remarked that the author has nicely imitated them.<sup>17</sup> The compiler of Tosa'if al-Tuman, writes that he has composed his Maqamat on the pattern of Hariri.<sup>18</sup>

Brockelmann states that 'they definitely profess to be a single imitation of the latter, they have a hero and a narrator, but the subject matter is varied, usually of a learned and technical nature'.<sup>19</sup>

15. MAQAMAT AL-HANFI: By Abul Ali Muhammad b. Abu Dahir b. Ahmad al-Sazi, who is known as 'al-Hanfi'. In the words of Brockelmann al-Hanfi 'dedicated 30 Maqamat to the Chief Magistrate al-Bin-Abu Harid Muhammad b. Muhammad b. al-Asim al-Shaharazuri (not the same as mentioned in Ibn Khallikan, vol. 1299, I, 597) the only indication of this date is the mention of Thakaf of Shirvan (51, 7); this title was first borne by Mansur Ghahr II about 550 A.H. His aim is to imitate Ramadhani and al-Hariri but to use simpler language. Like them he introduces his hero and a narrator and is fond of elaborate

16. Taysif al-Magham, p. 81

17. Taysif al-Magham pp. 81, 82

18. Hafi Khalifa, Tosa'if al-Tuman pp. 177-96

19. Brockelmann Encyclopaedia of Islam 102-6

descriptions, frequently drawing into the obscure, a number of 'Maqamat go together in pairs, the one being complimentary to the other'.<sup>19</sup>

According to the compiler 'catalogue Dar al-Tutub al-Misriya', al-Hanfi has composed 15 'Assemblies and these 'Assemblies have their own answers in 15 other 'Assemblies, which are cited together, thus they become 30 in number. They are published in Istanbul in 1354 A.H. = 1915 A.D.<sup>20</sup>

In the booklet al-Maqam<sup>21</sup>, it is noted that al-Hanfi has compiled 30 'Assemblies which were published in Istanbul with the Maqamat Ibn Maqala and others in a single volume. In his introduction of the Maqamat, al-Hanfi has stated that he has written for the Chief Magi al-Shahrazadri. He has imitated the Maqamat of Badī' al-Zaman and al-Hariri. His hero is the Umar al-Tanukhi and narrator al-Farās b. Zayd al-Misri. He avows that he has followed the course of Hariri in his own literary peculiarities, when he has recited verses whose all words point out 'Sheen' or 'Qaf' or 'Lam' or when he cites a Maqam, he uses its all words referring to 'M'. (All such letters e.g. Sheen, Sad, Qaf or M belong to the Arabic Alphabet). He has also composed his 'Assemblies in praise of a pigeon, inkpot, pen, horse or battle field etc. In all these subjects he has practised difficult and unfamiliar words which are not charming for his readers. Hence, they are not popular among the learned figures.

In his preface of the Maqamat, he has boldly stated

20. Fehris, al-Tutub al-Arabia no. 367-77

21. Maqamat al-Hanfi wa Ibn Maqala no. 5, 6

that he is not the originator of Maqamat writing and admits that he is a follower of Hariri, as the latter had learnt it from al-Haradhani. His two characters Idras b. Dabbas al-Misri and Abu Umar al-Tanukhi are similar to Basith b. Hammad and Abu Hayd al-Sorufi. But he has used Maqamat in a different manner than his predecessors. With regard to their aims and objects, as he affirms, in each Maqama he relates a person who has done good with him, hence he praises him and acknowledges his obligations upon him. His all Maqamat are in the form of questions and answers. Each Maqama is connected with the next Maqama which follows it. In his own words, it is a form of letter writing. This one letter requires some knowledge, the next is a clear answer to it. <sup>17, 21</sup>

16. MAQAMAT AL-MAHRANI : By Ishaq al-Misri Abu Abdullah Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Misri, who died in the year 575 A.H. His Maqamat contained various subjects including his existence, letters, messages, declarations, etc. <sup>20</sup> His Maqamat were edited by Hashim K. Haggag and al-Hariri and published from Cairo in 1963 under the title Maqamat al-Mahrani wa Maqamat al-Misri wa Maqamat al-Misri.

17. MAQAMAT AL-MAHRANI : By al-Misri Abu Muhammad b. al-Misri al-Misri al-Misri, who died in the year 569 A.H. This Maqamat is presented along with its explanations and meanings. <sup>22</sup>

18. AL-MAQAMAT AL-MAHRANI : By al-Misri Abu Muhammad al-Misri, who died in 514 A.H. (Its copy is from the year of the 8th year of al-Hijra, some of the early copy are some). 22. Fehris Al-Makhtutat no. 193, 531

20. AL-BAHA'AT AL-BALCHI : By Sa'ad Harrod al-'in Abu  
Bahr b. Umar b. Ishaud al-Balchi, who died in 559 A.H. = 1164  
A.D. He has composed 50 Baha'at in the Persian language in  
the style of Hariri.  
19, 25.

U.S. According to Brockelmann "Among the persons the names of (a) Hamedudin Abu Mir b. Mir b. Mahmud al-Balhi (d. 552/1164), which he wrote in 551 (1156) are

particularly esteemed; 'Uraagi in the Chagar Nagla compares them to those of Roudhani and Mariri. They consist of a number of 'unadrat o.c. between youth and age, between a rural and this, between a Physician and astronomer, also were notions of Spring and Autumn and love and fealty, and locally discourses of legal and mystical problems, but once again the matter is quite secondary to the form. No arrangement and titles of the 23rd or 24th volumes in the British Museum... 's. differ considerably from the edition and a new lithographed edition'. 25

21. MOHAMMAD ALI AL-KHAYAT: By Bahiruddin Khan born 11.8.1908, Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Tarzooni, No. 20, Baghdad and former of Baghdad during the Abbasid period in the 19th century.

23. Mr. Farukh, al-asa'1... 7. 75

24. Haji Thalifa, Test el-umum no. 17 4-92

25. Brockelmann encyclopedia of Islam no. 164 - 185

( a copy of this Naqarat was made in the 8th century of al Nizra and transmitted from the work done by the aqsha himself )<sup>22</sup>.

22. AL-TA'AMAT :- By Ghahab al-Im al-Shar'ani, who was assassinated in 527 A.H. (a copy of it was made in 670 A.H.).

23. AL-HAKIM AT-TAHLIYAH AT-SABIRAH AT-TAVIA; By al-  
Hakim al-Tahir al-Sahab b. al-Din, who was alive in the days  
of al-Tahir Jamal al-Din Abu Hasan Ali b. Rafi al-A'zai al-Sicri,  
who died in 623 A.H. as he has mentioned in the end of his  
"Magna. His "magna is in the form of discussion ("magna) which  
governs religious learnings, messages of the prophet, references  
to riddles, knowledge of eloquence, etc. It was related through  
the mouth of his son b. al-Tahir Abu Muhammad Adib al-Sahab.<sup>26</sup>

This drama is unique in its character, which does not own any sort of mendacity, ill-will etc. as one finds in al-Hamdhani and al-Hariri's sagas. There is no chief character or theme in it, but it is a gallery of various information. His sagas do not possess the classical decoration of words and sentences. The charm is due to its inner force. (The author of this saga died in 1225 A.D. As stated by Brockelmann in Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur, 27.

24. MACAMATI By Sheikh Tbn Al-Arabi, the 1st in 630 A.  
= 1210 A.D. 27, 29

25. MAHAM AL-URBANI by birth al- in b. al-abi, the son of  
away in 638 A.H. (the only reference in 638 A.H.) Cf. 2.

26. REMARKS BY AGENT: by Nagma Gino 'bu 'Akr bali'ohb, 'uhammed

26. Fehris al-Kutub Al-Arabia p. 200

27. Broderman Encyclopedia of Islam on 1 1/2, 3 2/3, 5 2/3, 7 2/3, 9 2/3, 11 2/3, 13 2/3, 15 2/3, 17 2/3, 19 2/3, 21 2/3, 23 2/3, 25 2/3, 27 2/3, 29 2/3, 31 2/3, 33 2/3, 35 2/3, 37 2/3, 39 2/3, 41 2/3, 43 2/3, 45 2/3, 47 2/3, 49 2/3, 51 2/3, 53 2/3, 55 2/3, 57 2/3, 59 2/3, 61 2/3, 63 2/3, 65 2/3, 67 2/3, 69 2/3, 71 2/3, 73 2/3, 75 2/3, 77 2/3, 79 2/3, 81 2/3, 83 2/3, 85 2/3, 87 2/3, 89 2/3, 91 2/3, 93 2/3, 95 2/3, 97 2/3, 99 2/3, 101 2/3, 103 2/3, 105 2/3, 107 2/3, 109 2/3, 111 2/3, 113 2/3, 115 2/3, 117 2/3, 119 2/3, 121 2/3, 123 2/3, 125 2/3, 127 2/3, 129 2/3, 131 2/3, 133 2/3, 135 2/3, 137 2/3, 139 2/3, 141 2/3, 143 2/3, 145 2/3, 147 2/3, 149 2/3, 151 2/3, 153 2/3, 155 2/3, 157 2/3, 159 2/3, 161 2/3, 163 2/3, 165 2/3, 167 2/3, 169 2/3, 171 2/3, 173 2/3, 175 2/3, 177 2/3, 179 2/3, 181 2/3, 183 2/3, 185 2/3, 187 2/3, 189 2/3, 191 2/3, 193 2/3, 195 2/3, 197 2/3, 199 2/3, 201 2/3, 203 2/3, 205 2/3, 207 2/3, 209 2/3, 211 2/3, 213 2/3, 215 2/3, 217 2/3, 219 2/3, 221 2/3, 223 2/3, 225 2/3, 227 2/3, 229 2/3, 231 2/3, 233 2/3, 235 2/3, 237 2/3, 239 2/3, 241 2/3, 243 2/3, 245 2/3, 247 2/3, 249 2/3, 251 2/3, 253 2/3, 255 2/3, 257 2/3, 259 2/3, 261 2/3, 263 2/3, 265 2/3, 267 2/3, 269 2/3, 271 2/3, 273 2/3, 275 2/3, 277 2/3, 279 2/3, 281 2/3, 283 2/3, 285 2/3, 287 2/3, 289 2/3, 291 2/3, 293 2/3, 295 2/3, 297 2/3, 299 2/3, 301 2/3, 303 2/3, 305 2/3, 307 2/3, 309 2/3, 311 2/3, 313 2/3, 315 2/3, 317 2/3, 319 2/3, 321 2/3, 323 2/3, 325 2/3, 327 2/3, 329 2/3, 331 2/3, 333 2/3, 335 2/3, 337 2/3, 339 2/3, 341 2/3, 343 2/3, 345 2/3, 347 2/3, 349 2/3, 351 2/3, 353 2/3, 355 2/3, 357 2/3, 359 2/3, 361 2/3, 363 2/3, 365 2/3, 367 2/3, 369 2/3, 371 2/3, 373 2/3, 375 2/3, 377 2/3, 379 2/3, 381 2/3, 383 2/3, 385 2/3, 387 2/3, 389 2/3, 391 2/3, 393 2/3, 395 2/3, 397 2/3, 399 2/3, 401 2/3, 403 2/3, 405 2/3, 407 2/3, 409 2/3, 411 2/3, 413 2/3, 415 2/3, 417 2/3, 419 2/3, 421 2/3, 423 2/3, 425 2/3, 427 2/3, 429 2/3, 431 2/3, 433 2/3, 435 2/3, 437 2/3, 439 2/3, 441 2/3, 443 2/3, 445 2/3, 447 2/3, 449 2/3, 451 2/3, 453 2/3, 455 2/3, 457 2/3, 459 2/3, 461 2/3, 463 2/3, 465 2/3, 467 2/3, 469 2/3, 471 2/3, 473 2/3, 475 2/3, 477 2/3, 479 2/3, 481 2/3, 483 2/3, 485 2/3, 487 2/3, 489 2/3, 491 2/3, 493 2/3, 495 2/3, 497 2/3, 499 2/3, 501 2/3, 503 2/3, 505 2/3, 507 2/3, 509 2/3, 511 2/3, 513 2/3, 515 2/3, 517 2/3, 519 2/3, 521 2/3, 523 2/3, 525 2/3, 527 2/3, 529 2/3, 531 2/3, 533 2/3, 535 2/3, 537 2/3, 539 2/3, 541 2/3, 543 2/3, 545 2/3, 547 2/3, 549 2/3, 551 2/3, 553 2/3, 555 2/3, 557 2/3, 559 2/3, 561 2/3, 563 2/3, 565 2/3, 567 2/3, 569 2/3, 571 2/3, 573 2/3, 575 2/3, 577 2/3, 579 2/3, 581 2/3, 583 2/3, 585 2/3, 587 2/3, 589 2/3, 591 2/3, 593 2/3, 595 2/3, 597 2/3, 599 2/3, 601 2/3, 603 2/3, 605 2/3, 607 2/3, 609 2/3, 611 2/3, 613 2/3, 615 2/3, 617 2/3, 619 2/3, 621 2/3, 623 2/3, 625 2/3, 627 2/3, 629 2/3, 631 2/3, 633 2/3, 635 2/3, 637 2/3, 639 2/3, 641 2/3, 643 2/3, 645 2/3, 647 2/3, 649 2/3, 651 2/3, 653 2/3, 655 2/3, 657 2/3, 659 2/3, 661 2/3, 663 2/3, 665 2/3, 667 2/3, 669 2/3, 671 2/3, 673 2/3, 675 2/3, 677 2/3, 679 2/3, 681 2/3, 683 2/3, 685 2/3, 687 2/3, 689 2/3, 691 2/3, 693 2/3, 695 2/3, 697 2/3, 699 2/3, 701 2/3, 703 2/3, 705 2/3, 707 2/3, 709 2/3, 711 2/3, 713 2/3, 715 2/3, 717 2/3, 719 2/3, 721 2/3, 723 2/3, 725 2/3, 727 2/3, 729 2/3, 731 2/3, 733 2/3, 735 2/3, 737 2/3, 739 2/3, 741 2/3, 743 2/3, 745 2/3, 747 2/3, 749 2/3, 751 2/3, 753 2/3, 755 2/3, 757 2/3, 759 2/3, 761 2/3, 763 2/3, 765 2/3, 767 2/3, 769 2/3, 771 2/3, 773 2/3, 775 2/3, 777 2/3, 779 2/3, 781 2/3, 783 2/3, 785 2/3, 787 2/3, 789 2/3, 791 2/3, 793 2/3, 795 2/3, 797 2/3, 799 2/3, 801 2/3, 803 2/3, 805 2/3, 807 2/3, 809 2/3, 811 2/3, 813 2/3, 815 2/3, 817 2/3, 819 2/3, 821 2/3, 823 2/3, 825 2/3, 827 2/3, 829 2/3, 831 2/3, 833 2/3, 835 2/3, 837 2/3, 839 2/3, 841 2/3, 843 2/3, 845 2/3, 847 2/3, 849 2/3, 851 2/3, 853 2/3, 855 2/3, 857 2/3, 859 2/3, 861 2/3, 863 2/3, 865 2/3, 867 2/3, 869 2/3, 871 2/3, 873 2/3, 875 2/3, 877 2/3, 879 2/3, 881 2/3, 883 2/3, 885 2/3, 887 2/3, 889 2/3, 891 2/3, 893 2/3, 895 2/3, 897 2/3, 899 2/3, 901 2/3, 903 2/3, 905 2/3, 907 2/3, 909 2/3, 911 2/3, 913 2/3, 915 2/3, 917 2/3, 919 2/3

28. Lehrbuch Rechtswissenschaft 22, 193, 194, 232

29. Fehri's Kutub al- Arabi op. 698 and 37



b. al-Sha'noori, who passed away in the year 654 A.H. (a copy of this Maqamat was made by Imām al-Dīn b. Hamatullah b. Muhammad in 994 A.H. Al-Azhar, 933, Na'icm, 23567 Tasawwuf 176 (AF).<sup>28</sup>

27. AL MAQAMAT AL-ARBA': By Bahuddin Ali b. Isa, who died in the year 692 A.H.<sup>30</sup>

28. AL MAQAMAT AL-JAM'IA: By Shamsuddin Muhammad b. Ali, who died in the year 689 A.H. it is said that he was killed in Yemen.<sup>30</sup>

29. AL MAQAMAT AL-TABDIA OR TEBDIA: By Shamsuddin MA'AD MUHAMMAD b. Nasrullah, well known as 'Ibn al-Faqih al-Jam'i' who died in 701 A.H.<sup>28</sup>

According to Brockelmann it is an imitation of Hariri's makamas 50 in number, dedicated to the family of D. Juwaini (cf. his Tarikh Jahān Numa, ed. Mirza Muhammad, GHS, 16/1, p. 2, note 2), by him in 672 (773) (S. Hajj Khalifa No 1 to 709).<sup>27</sup> Its name is mentioned as 'al-Maqamat al-Zeenia by the compiler of the catalogue 'al-tutub al-Musawwara, namely Fawad 'Ayyad and it was composed in 672 A.H.;<sup>23</sup> also Hajj Khalifa has named it as 'Al Zoenia'.<sup>24</sup>

30. MAQAMAT AL-'USHTUAC: By Shamsuddin Muhammad b. Suloman b. Ali b. Afif al-Din al-Talmasani, reputed as 'al-Sahab al-Tariff', born in 661 A.H. at Cairo and passed away in 688 A.H. = 1289 A.D. This is a fanciful Maqama, containing several matters of the same kind. It was published at Damascus.<sup>24, 31</sup>

30. Ismail Basha al-Baghdadi, Tash-al-'aknun... pp 535-39

31. Fehrie al-Tutub al-Arabia pp. 374-77

According to Brockelmann he is a Syrian - Egyptian poet, who applied this form in the field of love poetry, sometimes with luscious subjects!<sup>32</sup>

31. AL MAQAMAT AL-HIRIA AL GHISARIA : By Muhammad b. Afif al-Din al-Talmasani al-Shab al-Tarif, who died in 698 A.H. = 1289 A.D.<sup>32</sup>

32. MAQAMA AL-BAHRIYYA : By Karim al-Din Muhammad b. Abd b. Al-Mubarak b. Al-I'ma, who died in the year 692 A.H.<sup>32</sup>

33. MAQAMA FIL MAFAHISA TAIEN AL-TUT TAL NIGHIS : By Taj al-Din Muhammad (Mahmud) b. Abbed b. al-Tusnan al-Tamami al-Sarhadi, who died in the year 674 A.H. = 1275 A.D.<sup>32</sup>

34. MAQAMAT AL-HUSAIN B. AL-ATTIA : By Abu Yahya HAZAL, known as 'Al-Hussain b. Al-A'war', who died in 685 A.H. = 1286 A.D.<sup>32</sup>

34. MAQAMAT AL-HINDIA : By Abu Abbud, who was famous in the year 553 A.H. = 1158 A.D. (The said Maqamat was published in Delhi (India) in 1264 A.H.).<sup>33</sup>

36. GHAREEB AL-MAQAMAT : By Umar b. al-Mubarak al-Mawili, who has also compiled the text and completed it in the 6th century A.H. The margins contained colour plates, termed as Ghareeb al-Maqamat.<sup>34</sup>

37. AL MAQAMAT AL-FALSAFIA AL MAJUDDA AL-TUFA : By Abul Kaseim Abdul Aziz b. Tamam al-Iraqi, who passed away 637 A.H. They are 50 Maqamato. The author has compiled them in 702 A.H. and the work itself proves that it has been compiled by an Egyptian writer.<sup>35</sup>

32. Brockelmann encyclopedia of Islam 3: 670-258, 3: 1-558 p. 145-51, 51-190, 51-158, 51-255.

33. Kitab Ikhtaf al-Jumu' p. 281.

34. Supplement to Arabic catalogue p. 136.

35. Hajj Khalifa Kasef al-Tamam 3: 1704-92.

38. Inqamat Badrudin: They are only 12 Inqamat in all. It has been composed in 700 A.H.<sup>35</sup>  
The compiler of 'Khairat Farul al-Tutub al-Miyya' states the name of its author as 'Badrudin Abi al-Muhammad Ahmed b. Muhammad b. al-Mu'izz b. al-Muhtar al-Hazi, who was alive in 700 A.H. and has narrated Sa'qa b. Zayd about jolly persons and some accounts of literary personages etc. He has also compared with Idrisi's Inqamat and has attempted to adapt his mode of writing. He has presented his Inqamat in 700 A.H.<sup>36</sup>

H.B. This Inqamat is also said as 'Inqamat Ibn al-Mu'izz' or as 'Inqamat al-Isha'ra who died in 730/1329, according to Brockelmann.<sup>37</sup>

39. Inqamat al-Shahabi: By Shamsuddin Muhammad who died in the year 722 A.H.<sup>35</sup>

40. Inqamat al-Jawari: By al-Sheikh Muhammad al-Jawari who died in the year 725 A.H. Al-Jawari has tried to imitate 'Inqamat al-Ushshaq of Ibn 'Afif' who had expired in the year 600 A.H.<sup>35</sup>

41. Al-Inqamat Aliva-Hil-Taramat al-Jaliya: By Shamsuddin (al-Hafiz Muhammad) who died in 754 A.H. - 1354 A.H.<sup>35</sup>

Brockelmann has mentioned his name as 'Abul Fath Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Sayyad al-Nas who has composed his Inqamat in praise of the Prophet and his companions.'<sup>37</sup>

42. Inqamat al-Furush: By Sheikh Noor al-Din Hasan who passed away in 779 A.H.<sup>35</sup>

43. Inqamat al-Tardia: By Sheikh Noor al-Din Hasan who died in 779 A.H.<sup>35</sup>

44. Inqamat al-Thalith al-Ibni: By Sheikh Noor al-Din Hasan who died in 779 A.H.<sup>35</sup>

36. Feris al-Tutub al-Miyya pp. 391, 399

37. Brockelmann encyclopaedia of Islam II. 5.11.77, 5.11.13  
5.11.205

45. Maqama al-Ushshaq: By Shamsuddin Mahmud, who died in the year 725 A.H. - 1325 A.D.<sup>38</sup> Brockelmann has stated his name as Shahabuddin Ahmed al-Saba Mahmud b. Salomon b. Fehd al-Halbi al-Hanbali.<sup>37</sup>

46. Maqama Ibn al-Wardi: By the chief qari Zainuddin Abi Hafe Umar b. Muzaffer b. Umar b. Muhammad b. Abi al-Fawaris al-Mu' Annari al-Halbi, well known as Ibn al-Wardi who died in 749 AH 1349 A.D.

From his Maqamat the following are still available:

Al-Maqamat al-Antakia, in praise of a city named Antakia; al-Maqama al-Mushadida in praise of a city known as al-Nu'man; al-Maqamat al-Damishqiya and Maqamat al-Iftoran wa Maqamat-i-Fityan al-Gaman.<sup>36</sup>

47. Al-Maqamat al-Jalaliya-t-al-Safdia: By Hasan b. Abdi Muhammad 'Abdullah b. Umar b. Mahasin b. Abi al-Mullahib who has completed it about the year 717 A.H.<sup>39</sup> Brockelmann states the year of his death as 'began 708/1308'.<sup>40</sup>

48. Al-Maqamat al-Razi: By Ahmed b. Muhammad b. al-Murza'ffor al-Razi who has compared with the Maqamat of Hariri. They are 12 Maqamat (on this copy of the above mentioned Maqamat the year 738 A.H. is noted)<sup>39</sup>

It is just possible that they are compiled at the downfall of the Abbasid empire.

49. Maqamat al-AAibakya: By Salahuddin Ahmed al-Safa-Holal b. Aaibak al-Saifi al-Safdi who died in 764 A.H.<sup>40</sup>

50. Maqamat al-Suofia: Zainuddin Ibn al-Wardi who died in 749 A.H. - 1349 A.D.<sup>40</sup>

---

38. Ismail Basha al-Baghdadi Iyat al-Kakun pp 535-39

39. Fehris al-Mukhtutat p. 530

40. Brockelmann encyclopedia of Islam pp 5, 11, 175, p. 969  
5, 11, 202 a. 11, 174 a. 11, 170

51. Maqamat al-'A'laq al-Ahmad By 'Alauddin 'Abn al-'Arabi who died in the year 749 A.H. - 1349 A.D. It is also named as al-Mab'ut al-'Arabi. It is a Maqama on plague of which he died in the same year. According to Brockelmann it is a Maqama probably identical with the Maqama which <sup>Syuti</sup> put in his work on the plague.

52. Maqamat al-Falsafat al-Far Jumanat al-Fu'la: By Shamsuddin Ahmed Ali al-Damishqi who died in 727 A.H. - 1327 A.D. According to Brockelmann they are fifty maqamat dealing with the subject of mysticism. The full name of the author is Shamsuddin Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Damishqi. <sup>40</sup>

53. Maqamat Isha'ud-din: By Isha'ud-din Fir 'Alauddin 'Abd al-Faqih al-Duhairi who died in 791 A.H. - 1389 A.D. <sup>40</sup>

54. Maqamat al-Rasat al-'Ala al-'Arabi: By 'Al b. Ibrahim b. al-'Arabi al-Ahmedi who died in 711 A.H. - 1311 A.D. <sup>40</sup>

55. Maqamat al-Sana al-'Ahd al-'Ahd al-'Ahd al-'Ahd: By 'Alauddin 'Abd al-Fath Muhammad b. Muhammad 'Afdal al-Ahmedi who died in the year 760 A.H. - 1350 A.D. <sup>40</sup>

56. Maqama Abu Hafs Umar b. al-'Ahd: By 'Abu Hafs Umar b. al-'Ahd. The compiler of 'Sathirat' named Ibn 'Asad stated that 'Abu Hafs was living in his age. He was a visitor and 'Kاتب' (secretary) who has composed in prose and poetry both. He is also a man of unique valities of his time. Hence he has commanded vast knowledge and informations. The literary figures of his age have admired him for his wonderful writings. In the beginning of his Maqama, he states that the art of writing is one of the difficult arts and one who succeeds in it, he is indeed a lucky man. Again there are several chapters in it which deal with different subjects.

---

As he was living during the lifetime of Ibn Baran (d. 542 A.D.) his Maqama was also compiled in the Abbasid period. Abu Hafs has displayed his merits in prose and poetry equally but he has not produced the charm which is the sole share of al-Hamadhani and Hariri. Ibn Basam further remarks that he had seen Abu Hafs in 440 A.H. at 124/1, who had then ample stores of his command. He has also presented his poetry to the rich of his town. They are described in continuation with a (ocida (Panegyric)<sup>41</sup>.

57. Maqamat By Abul Qasim al-Thuraymi (d. 383 A.D.) al-Thuraymi has composed this Maqama during his meeting with a literary man (Adib) known as Ikhio and has defeated him in a certain discussion. Ibn Hamdan has described in his 'Maqamat' that he is a contemporary of al-Hamadhani and the latter as he is said, <sup>42</sup> defeated him by his excellent composition of the Maqamat. Al-Thuraymi has himself admitted that al-Hamadhani's superiority is based on his Maqamat. So far as the writing of Maqamat in Arabic prose is concerned, al-Thuraymi's work is unequalled in it but the pomp and grandeur of al-Hamadhani's Maqamat is invisible in his work. His Maqamat, it appears, is merely an effort to learn Maqama writing. Al-Thuraymi died in the year 383 A.H. - 993 A.D. while al-Hamadhani expired in the year 398 A.H. - 1007 A.D.

58. Maqamat By Abul Abbas Ahmed al-Qasbi, born in the year 756 A.H. and expired in the year 821 A.H.

This Maqamat is composed about 791 A.H. when he was appointed in the office of al-Insha i.e. office of secretarial correspondence. He

41. Al-Shanbari al-Zakira pp. 180, 184, 199

42. Al-Qasbi Subhi al-'Sha pp. 112, 113 to 130.

has described all qualities of Insha (secretarial correspondence) in his Maqama with brevity, e.g. Superiority of Insha, its precedence in secretarial correspondence (i.e. in the 'Ishan al-Insha), matters for the Secretary (Khatib al-Insha) such as his aims, objects, Grammar etc.

In his Maqama he has addressed to the Chief of Pidan al-Insha, namely Al-Magar al-Badri b. al-Magar al-'Alaie b. al-Magar al-Muhoovi b. Badrullah.

His Maqama produce superiority of secretarial correspondence (Insha) and secretaries (Kuttab) from beginning to the end.<sup>42</sup>

59. Maqama Ibn Nubata: By Ibn Nubata (d. 405 A.H.), who has compiled this Maqama after al-Hamadhani.<sup>43</sup> According to Joseph Comoy, Abdur-Rahim Ibn Nubata died in the year 374 A.H. - 984 A.D. and he was appointed as a Khatib (Secretary) in the court of the Hamadani Prince, Sayf al-Ma'mun.<sup>44</sup> But al-Hamadhani has composed his Maqamat in the year 302 A.H. at Nishapur.<sup>45</sup> Again the compiler of al-Hamadani's Maqamat has already reached the same conclusion.<sup>46</sup>

It is now quite evident that Ibn Nubata has not compiled his Maqama before al-Hamadhani, and he is not the creator of this style of composition, because he died in 374 A.H. The eminent writer H.A.R. Gibb in his book named 'Arabic Literature', has clearly stated that Ibn Nubata had died in 984 A.D.<sup>47</sup> .....

---

43. Siddiqi, Ibn al-Hariri p. 102

44. Sayf al-Ma'mun pp. 14, 15

45. Comoy Islamic culture July 1957

46. Umar Farrukh al-Hamadani p. 25

47. Gibb, Arabic Literature p. 62

W.B. It is just possible that it is a slip of pen only and the Subhata is wrongly noted instead of Abd Nasr Abdul Aziz b. Umar al-Sa'idi (d. 405 A.H.) whom I have earlier mentioned.<sup>113</sup>

60. Maqamat al-Maqamat-<sup>114</sup>fi-Sharh-i-'U'ani al-Maqamat: By Abu Sa'eed Muhammad al-Masoodi al-Bundahi, who died in the year 504 A.H.<sup>119, 50</sup>

61. Maqamat: By Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani (d. 598 A.H.) who has originated the Maqamat composition and then the latter generation has followed him.<sup>51, 52, 53,</sup>

62. Maqamat: By Sheikh Abu Muhammad Qasim b. 'Ali al-Farisi, (d. 516 A.H.) who has become the most distinguished Maqamat writer and has surpassed all.....<sup>51, 52, 53,</sup>

---

48. Brockelmann encyclopedia of Islam v. 152-63

49. Fehrist Hanidia Kutub Khana p. 65

50. Fehrist Kitab Khana Majlis Shura Hilli v. 176

51. Fehrist Kutub Arabi pp. 617, 618

52. Fehrist al-Arabiat pp. 225 to 227

53. Az'ed Tale, al-Kashshaf v. 168.



Chapter V

MAQAMAT REFLECT SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PEOPLE DURING THE ABBASID REIGN

As literature of every age is influenced by the social life of its people, Maqamat is no exception to this rule. Indeed, there are numerous instances in the contents of Maqamat which clearly depict the social condition of that period. Among the writers of Maqamat, there are only two leading personalities of al-Hamadhani and Hariri, who have described the condition of their people prevailing in those days. Other writers of Maqamat have only satisfied themselves with their contribution to this new pattern of composition. Their writings are merely for the purpose of their names, to be counted amongst the writers of Maqamat. However, they have only imitated their predecessors in this regard for the sake of reputation, although they could not achieve the same as their predecessors had won. Thus one can hardly get anything in their Maqamat with reference to the social life of the people during their lifetime, which is usually found in the Maqamat of al-Hamadhani and Hariri. However, the general condition of the Abbasid reign is firstly mentioned; secondly the instances depicted in Maqamat al-Hamadhani and Hariri relating the affairs of the people of their age; and thirdly a view of Maqamat of other writers concerning the social life of their people, if any, are noted.

The argument that the object of Maqamat is not to narrate or depict the social life of the people of its age and it is only to explain philology and teaching a new diction of writing is meaningless. The fact is that every kind of literature, prose, poetry etc. has certainly a vital connection with the affairs of

---

its audience, which cannot be neglected. of course, the purpose of the Maqamat is not to describe the condition of the society of its time, but their compilers have also related the affairs of the surrounding in which they had been living since long. Even to create a charm in their writings, it was essential to relate the affairs, of their time to which the people were usually accustomed.

Again, if one considers that Maqamat is nothing but an attempt to compose a drama in Arabic prose for the purpose of stage, it is a false and mistaken view, for there have been numerous examples in Maqamat which mention the general condition of the people when they were composed.

The following are the general condition of the people during the Abbasid reign, which are obviously found in Maqamat of al-Hamadani and al-Hariri.

As soon as the Abbasids came into power, they began a new kind of life which ~~are~~<sup>was</sup> quite unknown to their ancestors. The different influences of different races affected them with their union was a result of which new ways appeared in their life which were indeed non-Arabian in character. A collection of various forces of various nations that had mixed each other established a unique type of culture among them. The Abbasids adopted all novel ways whether they were Arabian or non-Arabian. Thus, they celebrated the famous day called 'Nauroz' which was a Persian festival and on this particular day they greeted their Caliphs, presented them gifts and poets recited verses in their praise. This illustrious Persian day was placed with the National Day like Id-Day. They began to put on fashinabba dress at that time, sarbhas, jalasewas of several kinds and other Persian dress, (azies used to wear big

---

Calasowas (Caps) and Caliphs tied a turban on their caps. Even turbans were used of different kinds by different ranks of people.<sup>1</sup> Each class of persons was allotted a separate garment for their use. The Caliphs rewarded rich prizes to their dependents which were not so plentifully given in the days of the 'Umayyads.' Besides, numerous sorts of vessels, furnitures, musical instruments, shining clothes were commonly used. The luxury and pastime of the Abbasid Caliphs were adopted by the subjects, who increased their practice because of the interest of their rulers. It is a well known maxim that 'people adopt the manners of their kings' (Al-Fas-u-'ala-Din-i-Muluk-i-his). With the exception of 'Abul'abbas al-Saffah who was busy in assassination during his whole life, all the Abbasid Caliphs enjoyed their life in complete comfort and luxury. For instance, Al-Mansur had fixed a day for entertainment; Al-Mehdi was so generous and kind that he richly donated his treasure to the people for their recreation, because his court was full of singers, virgin girls etc.<sup>1</sup> Al-Mehdi developed the fine arts in his time, because wealth was abundant and Persians especially Barmakids had achieved power and position during his reign, though he had several good qualities in him; Al-Mu'awizah his luxury with music, etc. while Al-Mamun being all such grandeur and entertainment at his command was also fond of books, discussion on philosophy, religion and jurisprudence etc. amidst the 'Ulama' (literary men) and jurists (Fukahas).<sup>2</sup>

The dispute between the two Caliphs namely Amin and Mamun had made their subjects distressed and poor. The Capital

---

1. Ahmed Amin Dufal Islam p. 104 (vol. I)

2. ----- do ----- pp 115, 120 (vol I)

had become a place of misery and pain. So when ~~man~~<sup>2</sup> gained power people returned to comfort and luxury.

In these circumstances those who were rich and close to the ruling monarch, they achieved the pompous society of the caliphs in their courts and enjoyed with them comfortably and luxuriously. This situation made a critical position for the award of honour which the caliphs had at their disposal. A large number of friends and relatives of the caliphs gathered in the court and they were interested in fine arts. The union of these factors made the progress ahead in the Abbasid reign. Briefly they constructed new buildings invented new designs for palaces, played with chess etc. Gambling was a common affair at that time. They painted beautiful sceneries, took keen interest in music and dance, opened gardens which were full of countless blossoms etc. Wealth was abundant and the Persian culture was much effective. They rolled in luxury and slave girls of various places were found in palaces. The lust of Beshahar and Abu Nuwas is also a new taste of this epoch. People were anxious to go through their erotic poetry which has no doubt marred their conduct.<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact all people were not equal in any era. Such was the case of Abbasid era. Neither all of them were rich nor all had approach to the caliphs, Governors and amirs. The songs of luxury and recreation described in Aghani or in Diwan of Abu Nuwas did not relate the whole condition of the masses. Neither wealth was equally distributed among them nor they were standing at par without consideration of their relations with various sections of society. A huge amount was spent on palaces of the caliphs, amirs, Commanders of armies and Governors.

---

3. Ahmed Amin Duhal Islam pp 125, 131 vol. I

Those selected persons used to spend some portion of their booty on literary personages, musicians, businessmen, retinues and their companions. Wealth was thus exclusively owned by them. But the general people were suffering from poverty and need. Baghdad then was a place of recreation for the rich. The compiler of Tarikh-i-Baghdad states thus;<sup>4,5</sup>

أعانت في طول من الأرض والعرض كبحار داراً إنما جنتها الأرض  
صفا العيش في بغداد واضر عوره وعيش سواها غير صافي ولا غنى  
لطول بما للأعماج إن غداً كماً مريء وبعث الأرض أمراً من الأرض

4.

In fact, it was a miserable place for the poor and needy persons, who had no peace and rest in the capital of the glorious empire of the Abbasids. The following verses reveal their conditions:-

بغداد دار طيبها آخذ لسيما مني بالنفاس  
أصلح للموسى لا لأمري بيت في فقر وإفلاس

4.

Similarly, religious and pious men disliked Baghdad due to cruelty, tyranny and lust which was prevalent there. Some religious men used to say about Baghdad, as the poet says:-

قل لمن أظلم التبسك في الدار  
الزم الثغر والتواضع في الدار  
س وأمسى لعد في الزحام  
ليس بغداد منزل الجبار  
ومنك القاري العتيار  
إن بغداد للملوك محل

4.

The condition of people at Iraq was almost similar to Baghdad. It was a place of wealth which the Governors had acquired from all persons. Countless sum was collected through land tax and other taxes. The life of its inhabitants had become too dear.

4. Ahmad Amin: Taba'at Islam pp 151 to 152 (Vol. II)

5. Al-Baghdadi: Tarikh Baghdad p. 68 (Vol. I)

those who were already rich they were becoming richer, on the other hand poor people were growing poorer and more <sup>more</sup>starving than the past decades. The reputed pessimist poet clearly depicted it in his verses:-

انى أرى الأسفار أسح ٧ الرعية غالية  
وأرى المكاسب نزرة ٨ وأرى القروية فاشية

6.

etc.

The aforesaid circumstances clearly prove that there were two conditions of the people of that era. The first of those who were rolling in wealth and they were contented with their life being secured from all worries and anxieties of the world, the rogues were needy and beggars who had no joy with them and they were passing their time in grief and sorrow. As a result of these two classes of persons the following state of affairs existed in this period:-

Firstly, a gang of robbers and plunderers came into existence. They molested people, robbed them of their belongings committed sacrileges, abducted women and minor boys in broad daylight and no ruler had courage to stop their immoral and unlawful acts. Thus they intended to ruin the capital and ruin the luxury of its people.

Secondly, religious and pious sentiments arose in the minds of those who were destitute and were unable to join the glorious court of the Caliph. They naturally became contented and satisfied with their limited means of life. The poets were also influenced with the situation prevailing in their age. Abu Nawas and Bashshar's erotic poetry belongs to the former class of people, while the verses of Abul-Tahia refer to the latter

section of people.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the literature of this age was affected with the above mentioned affairs of this state. The gates of the pompous palaces were open for the poets and learned men, who could recite poetry in praise of their donors, but such eminent poets and writers were in a limited number. The majority of people was poor and needy. Iraq, in this age was a shelter for poets, writers, historians etc, who always praised it.<sup>7</sup>

In the 3rd and 4th century A.H. literary condition of the people were more perfect and sound than the former times. Though it had been a mature age when literary men cited commentaries and explained hidden meaning of the texts. They also covered various nations and collected every branch of learning. But the economic growth of citizens was, indeed, unbalancing and there was no improvement in their life regarding self satisfaction and contentment. The rulers had absolutely ignored the basic principles of Islam, which made equal wealthy and poor persons. The rich were assembled in the courts of Caliphs, Governors and Amirs, while common masses were starving in streets and barren lands. They had no charm in their life. The worst and most deplorable condition was of these wealthy persons whose property was seized by the Caliphs for their own luxury and comfort due to their ill-will for them and they were made beggars. The historians unanimously praised the grandeur of the Abbasid courts to which each Caliph added a new sort of luxury and recreation. Even the small provinces of Buzayhid and Hamadanids at Syria were famous for their magnificence and glory.<sup>8</sup>

The large store of wealth was the cause of development of their new tastes and luxuries. But all entertainment was only for a limited number of persons e.g. the rich, literary figures, retinues and relatives. Generally the people used to live on

8. Ahmed Amin 'Umar al-Islam

charities and alms. Whenever, the Caliphs and Amirs were in need of money, they seized other's wealth by force and made them poor. As a sequel to this forced possession by the rulers and their Governors, the rich tried to conceal their property. They appeared as beggars, avoided the society of Caliphs and hated their award of titles and garments. The Arabic literature both in prose and poetry of this era cited examples in which the writers instructed the readers to keep away from the palaces of Abbassids and further they praised poverty by showing its virtues. Thus the birth of mysticism (tasawwuf) took place and mystics led the pious course towards God.<sup>9</sup>

One of the most striking examples of poverty is apparent from the conditions of some great personages of that time, who could not attain any reward from the Caliphs and passed their whole life in utter need and beggary. Among such famous literary figures were 'Abdul Wahhab al-Baghdadi, 'Abu Hayyan al-Tauhid al-Baghdadi, 'Abu Fuleman al-Mentisi, 'Abu 'Ali al-Asi al-Baghdadi.<sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly the financial condition of the state was most deplorable in those days because of huge expenditure of palaces, collection of various taxes from subject, bribery in courts of law, deviation of 'Amles in different sections e.g. Turkish, Daylem etc. appointment of 'Azirs and their quick dismissal by the then rulers. All these affairs were due to financial crisis of the state and so they were generally disappointed and poverty stricken.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently all arts had shifted to palaces, where poets and literary men could achieve success as well as financial support. Art for the sake of art was a rare object in those days.

9. Ahmed Amin Zuhar al-Islam pp 107, 113, 115 Vol. I

10 Ahmed Amin Zuhar al-Islam pp. 116, 120, 122 Vol. I



Those who led a solitary life and pursued their studies, they were quite unable to live easily. The division of estates among them was also one of the chief causes of inequality e.g. 'Alvids, Abbacids, Persons belonging to ancient families just as the heirs of Khalid Ibn Abd Sufra, Viziers etc.

The literary output of the Abbasid era clearly presents social condition of its people. Whereas it brings glory and magnificence of wealthy persons. It also relates poverty and beggary spreading at that time. The political and social deterioration, recreation and enjoyment, hard labour and idleness as well as Adib's interest in it, all such matters are depicted in their works. Al-Thalibi in his book named 'Yacima' has collected several instances of this era. Likewise, Ibn al-'Adi, Ibn 'Abbad Al-Kharrar, Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadhani, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi have produced various objects in Arabic prose, just as al-Mutanabbi, Ibn al-Hajjaj, Al-Sharif al-Ma'arri, Abul 'Ala 'Marri, etc, have noted in their poetry. The literature of this age displays 'Saj', extreme use of exaggeration, similes, metaphors etc. Some poets of this period, have also produced other objects, which were prevalent in their time, e.g. Abu Nuwas's poetry. The verses of Ibn al-Hajjaj and Ibn Sukarra have depicted immorality, lechery, deception, enjoyment and playing tricks for the sake of livelihood are produced in their writings. Thus it is clear that a class of persons belonging to the rich, merchants and literary figures were facing trial and trouble. The learned men were bound to seek help from wealthy persons, for which they wrote new tricks in order to earn their livelihood. Sometimes they adopted literary means of begging by presenting a social picture of their time in

---

their works and occasionally they cheated them by false accounts in order to win their hearts and ultimately they achieved monetary assistance from them.<sup>11</sup> It is also doubtful to note that there had been a certain class of people who were known as Al-Samsan or 'Dana Sasan' or Ahl-al-Kudla which means a group of mendicants. Some of these beggars were capable of producing their fraudulent means in literature through which they begged and collected money. Their literature was called 'Adabiya' in Egypt. Some other writers have suggested that their adoption of such a profession was only to advise the rich for spending their wealth. This class of people was existing in this period since its birth and due to it a kind of new literature had appeared, for example, in the Maqamat of al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri, all stories circle round a certain plot and mendicancy, while a particular person aspires to get money by false means and all these accounts are described in a literary fashion. In the Maqamat of al-Hamadhani and Hariri Abu Tath and Abu Kayd have obtained large sums by fraudulent means. The description of Samsanis (i.e. Samsan) is found in Maqamat al-Hamadhani. Hariri's Maqamat al-Samsani explains clearly their hardships and miseries.<sup>11,12</sup>

About economic crisis, the compiler of Zuhri al-Islam states that two different things arose as a result of it. Firstly mysticism and secondly, a group of robbers called 'Ayyaroon', who used to commit robbery on open roads in broad daylight, and they also had imposed taxes on some persons which if were unpaid, they used to attack them and get their payment by force. He further writes that 'Ayyaroon' were present in the Islamic empire of

---

11. Ahmed Amin Zuhri al-Islam on 135, 136, 136, 140 to 142 vol. 1

12. Ahmed Amin Zuhri al-Islam on 10, 32 vol. 2

this era. They had their particular dress etc. The renowned historian Ibn al-Asir has remarked that 'Ayyarakh' were found in all Islamic cities. They had gained reputation and many of them were ministers and held respectable posts. Sometimes they were also called as 'Shattar'.<sup>13</sup>

The said compiler has divided the people of this age in three classes. The first group is of the Aristocrats, which consists of the Caliphs, Amirs, Viziers and big merchants; the second includes middle class people e.g. merchants, and the last group belongs to the general people who were needy and beggars and had no means of their livelihood.<sup>13</sup>

In the decaying days of the 'Abbasid Caliphate' some splendid kingdoms were of special interest due to their literary or religious affairs e.g. the Sasanids (674-899 A.D) in Persia, the Buyyids who ruled over western Persia from (932-1055 A.D) the Ghaznavids in Afghanistan (976-1186 A.D) the Hamdanids in Syria (929-1003 A.D) and the Fatimids in Egypt (909-1171 A.D). But the Buyyids (a Persian dynasty) who ruled over Baghdad from 943 to 1055 A.D. had many qualities in them, which are described in Maqamat of that period. The Buyyids ruled in four places. They were Ahwas, Jebel, Faras and Iraq from 321-1147 A.H.<sup>14,15</sup>

According to Mahmud Ghazawi, a political, social and economic condition in Buyyid Dynasty was alarming. The people were characterless, inequality prevailed among different classes

---

13. Ahmed Amin Tuhaf al-Islam pp. 10, 32 Vol II

14. Nicholson Literary history of the Arabs pp. 527, 301

15. Ghazawi, al-Adab p. 3

of persons and the rich were busy in various sorts of recreation, while the poor were starving and murmuring against cruelty and injustice of their rulers. Hence the literature of this age is also divided into three sections. They are the following :

1. Literature of the rich and wealthy persons
2. Literature of disappointment and despondency
3. Literature of love and madness i.e. erotic poetry.<sup>16</sup>

The works of Ibn al-'Amid, al-Sahab b. 'Abbad, al-Sabi and others produce the affairs of the Caliphs, Amirs, and Governors of this age. All luxuries of their courts, palaces and other pastimes are fully depicted in their writings. These writers have well pleased and pleased their donors in their works and thus they have obtained ranks as well as rewards from them. The epistles named 'Ikhyaniat' has presented their merits in Arabic prose and poetry. One of the great genial writers of this age in respect of 'Ikhyaniat' and a contemporary of al-Hamadani, was al-Hamirani.

The literature of despair and hopelessness depicts the affairs of needy and poor persons in two ways. It is parallel to the former literature of the rich. Al-Hamadani in his epistles has also produced their social conditions.

The first chapter of despair among the poor begins with the literature of begging and mendicancy. The latter is described by way of literary complaints; in which cowardice, misfortune etc. are mentioned.<sup>16</sup>

But the literature of begging and mendicancy is one of the most striking subjects of this age, which shows the condition of a large number of people who had chosen it as their

---

16. *Qas-s al-Adab* pp. 180, 190, 201, 209, 211, 212, 214, 222, 239

vocation. These mendicants and beggars were passing a hard time and no profession was suited to them, for they wanted to lead an easy life without any consideration of humility and meanness. So they left agriculture, business and other professions and begged from place to place by playing tricks and deceiving people. Al-Jahiz, al-Bayhaqi and al-Hamadhani have depicted their life with their mendicancy. In this period mendicancy was widely spread in the whole Islamic empire. Gradually it became a proverb just as al-Hamadhani has stated in a letter addressed to a certain Qazi mentioning himself as one of 'Ashab al-Jarah' etc. Here this word stands for 'beggars and mendicants'. It is also a fact that a section of people were called 'Sasania' or 'Banu Sasan' in this age. They are referred in 'Maqamat al-Hamadhani' and in 'Maqamat al-Sasania' of Hariri. Both of them are celebrated writers have related the cause of begging and its ways.<sup>16</sup>

However, the word 'Sasania' or 'Banu Sasan' was used for 'Sa'aleek'... a class of people who sold their self respect, religion and honesty at the cost of their livelihood. They used to wander from place to place, played tricks and collected a lot of money. They had also their own lexicon which was called 'Mamakhat Banu Sasan' which they used in prose and poetry both. All people of this period were aware of this particular lexicon.

The best literary diction of begging is produced through the Maqamat in which a certain person earns his livelihood by cheating and deceiving others. In each Maqama, the same person appears and displays his fraud.

Al-Hamadhani and Hariri are both influenced with the general condition of their age in which beggary and poverty had marred their life. Hence they have selected this popular subject for their Maqamat.

---

The latter kind of despair was explained in the literature of complaints. Under this heading they described misfortune, cruelty of time, trials poverty and need, etc. The majority of people were poor and even the powerful men were imprisoned and put on trial. Among such persons were al-Sabi, Abu Hayyam al-Tauhidī, Ibn al-Lakḥ, Ibn al-Hajjaj etc.<sup>16</sup>

But so far as the literature of debauchery is concerned, it was limited in a small circle during the 3rd century of al-Hijri. It was indeed the 4th century of Islam in which this vicious kind of literature had developed, chiefly in Iraq and Persia and generally in the whole kingdom in which the Bawayhids ruled. As the rulers did not take any care to check it, the interests of their subjects had increased. Fornication and dances had become common affairs of the day. In places like Persia Ahwas, Sus (a province of Khuzistan) and Shiraz, lust and corruption were commonly found. A large number of male and female singers were living in Baghdad. The masses had a keen interest in all kinds of enjoyments and were also characterless. The reign of Bawayhids were not free from those instances of evils, but it was certainly a notable feature of this century. The literature of debauchery is thus divided into three branches of such literature. They are the following:

1. Literature of wine and songs: Not only common people but the Qazis and jurists were drunkards e.g. al-Tanukhi. Songs were inevitable on the occasion of drinking and some poets have recited ample verses concerning wine and music e.g. Ibn al-Hajjaj etc.

2. Love with boys (called Chilman) and slave girls:-

Abu Nuwas was a famous poet who wrote poetry about

Children in the 2nd century A.D. Among Buwayhids this habit was generally found in great personages as well as ordinary people. Certain Qasbi, Jurists, Traditionists and others were naturally interested in Children e.g. Al-Sahib b. 'Abbad, al-Jahli, Vicer al-Luthliabi, some other rulers and wealthy persons. The palaces of the Caliphs and particular places were full of maidens.

3. Literature of Vices and abuses :- The literary taste of the period had lost its morals and had become corrupted due to bad character and vicious habits of its people. Ibn al-Jajaj and Ibn Sukarra among the poets and al-Sahib b. 'Abbad, al-Juharizmi, al-Hamadani, Abu Dulaf etc. among litterateurs have produced many examples of such immorality in their works.<sup>17</sup>

Shortly, whatever they have described in their writings, they are not fanciful stories alone but are firmly rooted in the life of the people of their age. The Buwayhid rulers were greedy carelers and were badly treated by their Vicere. They had also seized the property of the rich and poor. There were many taxes imposed on their subjects which was collected by force. Baghdad then, was one of the victim places under their rule, where the social condition had bitterly deteriorated and hunger and beggary had widely spread. Its administration had become so weak on account of various vices that life of its inhabitants was full of misery and pain. In a few words, lack of money, characterlessness, deception and mockery, tyranny, injustice of the judges, assemblies of wine and songs, Children and maidens, use of abusive words, poets and other prominent literary figures in the palaces of Governors, Amirs and Caliphs and

17. Ghazali al-Adab pp. 248, 250, 252, 266, 270, 274, 278, 281

flattery for the sake of livelihood, were the common vices of this era.<sup>18</sup>

As literature of a particular age is the product of a certain circle in which the writer lives and observes his own surroundings, his works thus relate the works of that time and place. In truth, the Islamic empire had shattered in the 4th century A.E. People were unequal and divided into many classes. They had no principle for themselves and it is indeed, a fact that there were no social or religious injunctions upon them. Hence, the literary figures were also free to write anything which they wished of their own age. The circle of literature had become vast and literary men described their social condition in their works in detail. They did not leave any subject for personal but cited it accurately as they found at that time. The *Aristles* of al-Sakhi, al-Sahab, al-Naradhani and al-Thurayzmi contain matters prevalent in their lifetime. Every corner of life and even the most trifling issue is introduced in them. Side by side proverbs, riddles and other fine sentences are frequently used. It is doubtless to note that their literature presents merchants, artists, reputed personages, mendicants, thieves and beggars etc. in a similar manner.<sup>18</sup>

This social outlook is one of the most valuable treasures of literature whose examples are produced in the verses of Ibn al-Hajjaj, Ibn al-Kutaybi etc. and in the fables and tales of Miskawayh and al-Tanukhi. This literature of the Buwayhids presents various forms of it, because it was abundantly affected by the political and social condition of that period. But as the objects of literary men were different, they selected different styles of composition, in order to achieve their



different aims. Thus the literature which was composed for cultured and civilised class was decorated with 'Saj', new ways of 'Badi', choice and elevated sentences, etc. but the literature representing the common people remained plain and simple.<sup>19</sup>

The 4th century of al-Hijri was the most illuminated century from the point of extension and development of various sorts of literature in various modes of writings. The poets and secretaries of this era had several places for their fame and achievement of <sup>re</sup>wards. It was not limited to the Capital of Baghdad only. New dynasties had come into existence in the neighbourhood of Islamic empire, such as Hamdanids in Aleppo, Buyyids in Iraq and Tahirids and Samanids in Khurasan, Egyptian and Spanish rulers were also fond of knowledge and learning. The learned figures of those days used to shift from one place to another and were highly esteemed by the rulers of that place. They were similar to those merchants who migrated from one place to another for selling their goods. Among such writers the names of Abul Hasan al-Solami, al-Hamadani and Qazi al-Jurjani are well known. Shiraz, Rayy, Nishapur, Jurjan, Baghdad and some other places were the centres of these celebrated writers.<sup>20</sup>

An eminent writer states that the Arabic literature of the 2nd century (A.H)<sup>21</sup> was with few exceptions, the literature of an urban society, concentrated for the most part in 'Iraq' and the majority of its producers were half-Arabs or non-Arabs. the resulting changes and developments in literary productions are more marked in prose than in verse of this period. He adds

19. Ghazawi al-Adab pp. 113, 115, 117

20. Ghazawi al-Adab pp. 119-120

21. Encyclopaedia of Islam Fas 10 Vol I p. 587

that 'it is, however, in these newer types that the social changes and currents in the age found their further expression. The first impulse came from Ghazal poetry of the Bid'ja and its musical accompaniment.... Together with the new trends of urban poetry, several of the movements of Umayyads age (notably Shi'ism) still continued to furnish themes for poetic elaboration....<sup>21</sup>

In support of the view that all literary products of the 3rd century (A.H) and hence display social affairs of their age, the same author remarks as follows :

'The problem that remained to be solved was that of mobilisation, or how to bring these studies out of their scholastic or technical isolation into a positive relation with the public interests and social issues of the day. This problem was illuminated, rather than solved by the genius of al-Jahiz (d. 255/869) who brought them to bear on all aspects of contemporary life.... But the final solution was found by his later contemporaries' as he asserts<sup>21</sup>

According to him all literary productions ranging from 3rd to 5th century A.H. are living social records through which one can easily achieve information about the circumstances under which they had passed their life. And in his own words "the internal developments with further expanded and accelerated the vast extension of literary activities, which hitherto all but confined to al-Irak began in the 3rd century to be cultivated in a large number of centres, from Samarkand to Tadmor and 'ndalus..."<sup>21</sup>

He further says about Maqamat and vigorously declares that al-Hariri's Maqamat, like those of al-Burhānī, are firmly rooted in the common life of the Islamic city, and portray its manners and its humours realistically as to constitute one of

the most precious social documents of the Islamic ages.<sup>21</sup>

As in prose, in poetry too, he states, 'to a certain extent also they were the prisoners of their society. In his private verse the poet was no doubt free to amuse himself as he pleased, but the doctrine which finally prevailed was that his major function was to 'immortalise' his patron by his panegyrical Rasides; a curious but remarkable revival of the tribal function of the Pre-Islamic poet.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently prose and poetry both were relating the accounts of their people and their various affairs prevalent in the society of the day. The distinguished writer has further expressed himself thus :

"From the fourth century on, such pieces of natural descriptive epistles, poems on social occasions and the like constitute, together with epigrams and ceremonial Rasides, the stock-in-trade of all minor poets in every part of the Muslim world, and in varying degrees of excellence. By now the use of *badī* had become so universal in poetry as to be a natural constituent of the finished poetic imagination; in the ghazal or wine song it might be allowed to play only a minor part, but no poem with any pretension could be composed without it.<sup>21</sup>

One of the renowned writers in the history of the Arabs namely Philip K. Hitti has expressed his view about the glory of Abbasids and the culture which was popular among them, in these words:-

"It was under the Abbasids that Islamic civilisation experienced its golden age.... attracted to the capital poets, wit, musicians, singers, dancers, trainers of fighting dogs and cocks and others who could interest or entertain.... the luxurious scale of living made this period popular in history and in fiction, but what has

rendered it especially illustrious in world annals is the fact that it witnessed the most momentous intellectual awakening in the history of Islam and one of the most significant in the whole history of thought and culture." 22

Again he states about the condition of people when the Abbasids were losing their splendour and their downfall was soon to come. He says that "in the period of decline, characterized by excessive concubinage, laxity of sex morality and indulgence in luxury, the position of women sank to the low level to find in the 'Arabian Nights....' alcoholic drinks were often indulged in both in company and in private .... Even Caliphs, Viziers, Princes and judges paid no heed to the religious injunction.... The congregations who participated in such gatherings were mostly slaves of loose character, as illustrated by many stories; they constituted the gravest menace to the morals of the youth of the age. At the head of the social register stood the Caliph and his family, the government officials and the satellites of these groups. In this last class we may include the soldiers and bodyguards, the favoured friends and boon companions, as well as the clients and servants. The servants were almost all slaves... some were eunuchs attached to the service of the harem, others termed Chilmen, who might be eunuchs, were the recipients of special favours from their masters wore rich and attractive uniforms and often beautified and perfumed their bodies in effeminate fashion... A judge of whom there is record used four hundred eunuchs. Poets did not disdain to give public expression to their perverted passions and to address amorous pieces of their composition to 'beardless young boys,' etc. 22

According to Nicholson "the abbassids ruled with absolute authority over the life and properties of their subjects, even as the Sasanian monarchs had ruled before them. Persian fashions were insisted at the court, which was thronged with the caliph's relatives and freedmen (not to mention his womenfolk), besides a vast array of uniformed and decorated officials.<sup>23</sup> 'the new capital' as he states, 'Baghdad became the centre of literature and arts, 'the market' as an Arab historian puts it, to which the wares of sciences and arts were brought, where wisdom was sought as a man seeks after his stray camels, and whose judgment and values were accepted by the whole world."<sup>24</sup>

Maqamat al-Hamadhani and Hariri relating the Social Life of their Age.

---

It has already been noted that the Maqamat of both eminent writers, al-Hamadhani and Hariri are firmly rooted in the common life of the Islamic city, and portrays its manners and its humours so realistically as to constitute one of the most precious social documents of the Islamic middle ages.<sup>25</sup> Hence, in the following pages there is an outline of the conclusion after perusal of each Maqama. Thus beginning with the Maqamat of al-Hamadhani, they relate the particulars as noted below:

In his first Maqama, namely al-Qariri, al-Hamadhani presents literary objects which concerns the roots and poetry. The narrator, 'Isa b. Hisham visits Jurjan, one of the Turkish cities and there he meets Abul Fath. Then later on gives his opinion about reputed poets e.g. Imraul Qais, Nahlghy Tuhair, Tarfa, Jarir and Farasdaq. In his verses, Abul Fath has complained against the

---

23. Nicholson Literary history of the Arabs p 33, 356

24. Gibb, Arabic Literature p 33

25. Encyclopaedia of Islam Pas 10 vol. I p 587

tyranny of time and has related his worries. The above Maqama refers to the central place of learning, Baghdad and its surroundings which were a residence of great literary personages during the days of al-Hamadhani. The kings, emirs and the general people were keenly interested in literature and the reward of heavy sums along with high titles made the literary figures to continue their literary pursuits. One of the significant features of his Maqamat is that he often names them after some cities, he is acquainted with it and most of these cities belong to Persia.<sup>26,27</sup> But Al-Azizia is named after its poetical theme. Thus it directly refers to the poets and their poetry. Al-Hamadhani in this Assembly gives his own views of the ancient and modern poets.

In his second Maqama Al-Azizia, 'Isa b. Hiram leaves for Baghdad in the season of dates. There he sees Abu Path, who is shabby and ill-dressed, stretching hands for alms and was reciting verses in which he described his need and poverty. The economic condition of the people was very shocking during al-Hamadhani's days the rich and wealthy persons were enjoying their life with comfort and satisfaction, while middle and poor classes were suffering due to lack of financial position. They were looking to great men for assistance and were playing tricks to gain their favour and support. It was the capital of Baghdad where they used to go for seeking their livelihood. The said Maqama relates that Baghdad was the centre of the rich where a poor like Abul Path had gone to get money by reciting his verses, as it was the taste of its people, and by showing his poverty and hardships he always received alms and charities.<sup>27</sup>

---

26. Zayf al-Maqama pp 25,27

27. Abduhu, Sharah Maqamat no 1,5,6

In this Maqama as well as in the first Maqama, references of economic crisis, administrative obstructions and boggary are made. The last two verses of the first Maqama relate that time is critical and no one can feel solace so long as he remains at one place. These verses of Abu Dulaf, who had clearly described the condition of a group called 'Daru Saana' or Ahl-ul-Radin accuse his age with injustice, cruelty and corruption.<sup>28, 29</sup> The relief, he states, was only in roaming about like mendicants who earned their livelihood by deceiving people and playing tricks with them. Hence the literature of this period has exhibited one of the most striking class of people namely, the poor and mendicants. Generally in Maqamat a reference is always made towards this theme... the theme of boggary and mendicancy.

In his third Maqama, al-Balakhia, 'Isa b. Hisham goes to Balakh, one of the Turkish cities at that time for cotton business. Abul Fath accompanies him on his way, relates his sufferings and requires money. After he achieves 'Minar' someone has asked him whether he has been cheating in the markets of Iraq. On this, he recites a verse meaning that there are people who adopt manifold existence, sometimes they are Arabs while at another time they are 'Naboot' i.e. a class of persons residing in Iraq. Iraq was one of the important places at that time, where all activities of life e.g. business were fastly developing. The receivers were making plans and cheating people in different ways. This class of people was known as 'Nabateen', who were found in Iraq and were famous for

dealing by various practices of mendicancy.<sup>30, 31</sup>

- 
28. Ghazawi al-Adab p 212  
 29. Ath Thalibi Yatima p 174 vol. III  
 30. Abduhu Sharah Maqamat on 9, 10  
 31. Ath Thalibi Yatima p 185 vol. 3

Abu Dulaf, a poet who was fully aware of this class, has reported them in a verse. In 'Yatima' al-Thalibi has also quoted the same verse. In this verse he has named a leader of this group called 'Hafsunayh' and some other leaders are also mentioned. Al-Thalibi states while citing about 'Hafsunayh' that these people are known as 'Habateen' who are Ajamis (non Arabs) and they adopt monogamy and do not speak Arabic.<sup>31</sup>

Although Iraq was the centre of several activities of life, yet the social condition of its people was quite unsatisfactory because of differences between Shia and Sunni, division among army and bad treatment of rulers with their Viziers. As a result of these frictions, the political, economic and administrative machinery of the ruling class had failed to carry on its duties properly and peacefully.<sup>32</sup>

His Maqama Al-Sajistania, is named after a place called Sajistan situated in Eastern Persia, where the narrator Isa b. Hirsan goes for some task and by chance he meets Abul Fath who is announcing among masses to be a national of Yemen. At this place he plays another trick to get money and succeeds in it. By the word 'Yemen' is meant victory and not the place which is called by it. This only goes to show his success at the place where he is practicing mendicancy. The only importance of this Maqama is to relate an additional trick of the deceiving classes, which was widely spread during al-Hamadani's life.<sup>33</sup>

The Maqama, al-Tufis, is named after 'Tufa' where Abul Fath relates his miseries and achieves money from Isa b. Hirsan, who recognises him when he opens the doors of his house. The youth

32. Ghazali, Al-Adab p. 27

33. Abulhu, Sharah Maqamat no 14, 20, 25



is compared with night and the old age with day. The only aim of this Maqama is to display poverty and mendicancy during the Abbasid reign.<sup>33</sup>

In Maqama, al-Asadiah, al-Hamadhani has described all the qualities of a lion which increases knowledge. Abul Fath uses force and obtains money from Isa b. Hisham and his companions.<sup>34</sup> The significance of this Maqama is that it gives information about 'Sa'adiah', 'Shattar' and 'Kutalassasoon'. These people were not simple beggars by deception, but those were known as 'Shattar' they used to take property by means of force, while mendicants and (Ahl-i-Kudiah) used to beg with humility. When the Arabs and Persians mixed each other, those who were wicked they learnt mendicancy (Kudiah) and they were known as Banu Sa'ad.<sup>35</sup> In ordinary language this class may be called 'a gang of decoits or robbers' who used to snatch away property forcibly.

In Maqama al-Ghoelania, Isa b. Naddah-Panuri has related a meeting with Farasdaq and Abul al-Asadiah. It is said that Arabic poetry begins with Imrul Qais and ends on Abul al-Asadiah. The political talents of al-Hamadhani are shown in this Maqama.

In Maqama al-Azberbejaniah, Isa b. Hisham was in Azberbejan, place in Iraq on north western side and there he sees Abul Fath delivering a lecture. As soon as the former recognises the latter he asks him about his deception and begging. The latter then replied him about his wandering life, hard days and seeking help by this vocation. This Maqama elucidates the point that the gang of robbers (Sa'aleek) used to visit from one place to another deceiving, begging and thus collecting wealth from others. They wandered a number of cities and towns namely Iraq, Persia, Sajista

34. Al-Infah'ie Tarikh adab no 209, 212, 233

35. Ghanawi al-Adab no 209, 212, 233

Khurasan, Qazwin, Tabaristan, Armenia, Aderbaijan, Arabian places etc. In the last verses of his Maqama "derbaijan" he has admitted himself to be a wanderer whose time had compelled to move from place to place. These robbers, had spread their fraud to distant lands as this Maqama clearly mentions.<sup>36, 37</sup>

In al-Jurjanis, Abul Fath tells that he belongs to Askani-  
daria, a place on the borders of Spain and comes from the Umayyad-  
family, so that he can gain favour of people because of his con-  
nection with a high family such as Umayyads who were considered  
one of the most respectable families in those days. He later tells  
that he has wandered a number of cities and towns including Iraq  
on account of his poverty. Al-Hamadani expresses dissatisfaction  
and carries prevailing among the persons of his time through his  
vagabond named Abul Fath. Then he gives a reference to his native  
place, Hamadhan where Abul Fath goes in the guise of the author  
himself and is greeted, esteemed and a feast is given in his honour.  
The people of Hamadhan have given him a nurse also and have  
highly honoured his guest.

Again, he begins to roam about and earns his livelihood  
by means of begging. The social condition of his own land Hamadhan  
is nicely produced in this Maqama. Al-Hamadani is personally  
anxious to praise his mother land and its inhabitants. Even then he  
does not conceal his his needs which has compelled him to wander  
from place to place.<sup>38.</sup>

In 'Aushonis, a reference is made to Aushan, a city  
in Iraq and of Rayy, which is also a city of Iraq. Both these  
places are well known due to some leading literary personages

---

36. Abul Fath Maqamat pp. 35, 60

37. Ghazali Al Adab pp. 212, 234

38. Abul Fath Maqamat p. 43

belonging to those places. The only point which one finds in the Maqama about the social condition, is evident from a single verse recited by Abul Fath who after receiving money declares that people also are asses and one should make himself superior to themselves. This is why he has cheated them because he does not want to be included among the fools of his age. <sup>39</sup>

The religious persons are related intro of his Maqamat, namely Ahwasia and Ma'zra, the former is called after a famous place 'Ahwas' which has been a central place under Buyyids. But the general complaints against hunger, poverty, cruelty and hard days do not exempt Ahwas<sup>40</sup>.

In Ma'zra the place of occurrence is shown at Basra, where Abul Fath delivers a religious discourse and recites a good deal of verses. Both of these Maqamat display al-Hamadhani's excellent eloquence and power of oratory. This Maqama like the former incites them to do good, to be religious and pious and by these holy exhortations Abul Fath became able to achieve wealth for his livelihood. <sup>41</sup>

In al-Baghdadia, several qualities of his age and its people at Baghdad are clearly depicted. Many varieties of meals and other things which were commonly used by the kings, Governors and Amirs have been finely produced. On the other side, begging and hunger is revealed by the appearance of Abul Fath who goes to Baghdad in order to get his livelihood. <sup>40, 41</sup> According to Aristophanes 'Baghdad is certainly the capital of the world, and the mine of every excellence. It is a city whose inhabitants have always been first to unfurl the banners of knowledge, and to raise the standard of science. Indeed their subtlety in all branches of learning, their gentle

---

<sup>39</sup>. Abul Fath Sharan Maqamat p. 10, 52, 128

<sup>40</sup>. Abul Fath Sharan Maqamat p. 55

<sup>41</sup>. Kayf, al-Maqama p. 30.

generous and amiable disposition noble bearing, astuteness, wit, penetration and talent are deservedly praised.<sup>42</sup> During Al-Nasabani's age the famous seat of knowledge namely, Bagdad had become a place of hardship and pain for the poor, who were not satisfied with the administration of the rulers, and almost all successful men were corrupted and injustice and oppression were being done. Baghdad then was paradise for the rich alone, the literary figures who had attached themselves with any court of the King or Amir, were exempted, but ordinary learned men were bound to suffer as the subjects generally were leading a miserable and a gloomy life.<sup>43</sup>

However, Al-Nasabani in his *Maqamat Al-Baghdadiyyin* related luxurious and magnificent life of the rich. Just contrary to it, is the life of a beggar like 'Abul Fath, who pleased the audience through his association and advice and easy way of life, which he was bound to adopt on account of the affairs prevailing at that time.

The writer of 'Duhul Islam'<sup>44</sup> states that inequality was the main cause of disquietude for the people of Baghdad. The state property was not equally distributed among the subjects. The major portion of it was reserved for the expenses of the palace of the Amir, the orders of justice, the wars and those who were more akin to these great men. There was inequality among different classes of people. The literary figures, musicians, merchants, retinues and others were allowed to receive a little share from the amount of the rich class by means of pleasing

42. Arbuthnot, Arabic Authors pp. 36, 37.  
43. 'Izzat Amir Duhul Islam' pp. 131, Vol. I.  
44. 'Izzat Amir Duhul Islam' pp. 132, 133, Vol. I.

them of Panegyric verses of the poets etc. But the life of common people at Baghdad was far from being satisfied and happy. The rich were enjoying their life with all comforts and luxuries as a poet vigorously declared that Baghdad was 'Paradise of the Earth'. The poor were absolutely feeling sorrow and were murmuring against the tyranny of time which had given everything to the rich and nothing to them.<sup>45</sup> Similar was the condition of religious men, who were really tired of their life at Baghdad. A poet has said that pious men had no place in Baghdad, because it was a residence of the kings and not virtuous men. Al-Hamadani has felt aggrieved with the social condition of the people of Baghdad, as he has stated it in his verses.<sup>46</sup>

Al-Basri, is named after Basra. Al-Hamadani in his Maqama has stated about poverty which is generally found in his age. These are tired of their married life and are facing enormous hardships. In a verse he says that buggery has become popular in the days of regner and sensuals and all generous men have become poor, hence they are unable to help anyone. Those who should not get any rank or position in their life, have attained it, while those who are worthy to be admired are ignored and uncared for. One of the reputed poets of Basra namely, Ibn Luthfi al-Basri (Abul Hasan Ali, b. 300) has complained the time and people in a verse. He says that in Basra there is no independent figure, nor there is any generous man. It is really a barren land which bears no fruit. His satire is well known in literary circle of the Arab world and he does not leave even his motherland from his satirical verse. In some other verses, again

45. Ahmed Amin Qasas al-Islam no. 97, 115, 116, 120, 121 Vol I

46. Yakut mu'jam p. 169 Vol. 2

he has strongly criticised the time that has made gentlemen of his era ignoble and wicked. The time has changed noble for ignoble, good for bad, generous for miser etc.<sup>17, 18, 19</sup>

As a matter of fact the time was too hard for its literary figures. They were poor and necessities of life had compelled them to attach themselves with some wealthy persons to bear sufferings of life in desolation. The beggars were compelled to adopt such shameful life of mendicancy and deception. If the society had not made them poor and beggar, indeed, they would not have done so. In al-Basria, Al-Hamadani has depicted the growing hunger and poverty of his age at doors through the mouth of Abul Fath, who has adopted this practice with all seriousness and grandeur. Of course, he has laughed at the social condition of his age which is created by the rulers and emirs. It really produces the best picture of the society of poets.<sup>50</sup>

This Maqama al-Basria, is named after an Arabian tribe called Banu al-Basriya. The narrator, 'Ishaq b. Ishaq when he is returning to his homeland passing through a terrible route. The former begins to speak eloquently and recites a few verses. Through them he has disclosed his need and want of money and thus gets it from the narrator. The reference to miserable condition of people and their mendicancy is also evident from this Maqama.<sup>51</sup>

Al-Hamadani proclaims in Maqama al-Jahizia<sup>52, 53</sup>

- 
- 17. Abul Fath Maqamat pp 52 to 61
  - 18. Ath-Thalibi Yatinah pp 117, 125 (vol 2)
  - 19. Gharnati Al-Adab #. 23h
  - 50. Al-Madani Amin Tuhfat al-Jalil pp 115, 116, 121, 122
  - 51. Abul Fath Maqamat pp 64, 69
  - 52. Gharnati Al-Adab pp 233, 234
  - 53. Zayf Al-Maqamat pp 27, 28

that he is equal to Jahiz, one of the most celebrated writers of the Abbasid period who died in 255 A.H. because he says that each time produces its own Jahiz, therefore, no is Jahiz of his age. The vagabond Abul Fath represents Al-Hamadani when he speaks fluently and recites verses before Isa b. Hisham. He also points out some defect in the writings of al-Jahiz and shows his superiority in this respect, because he deems that his works especially ~~in~~ *Maqamat* do not bear any defect in them. The allegation of Al-Hamadani that certain defects are found in the works of Jahiz, is absolutely baseless, for no writer of his age including al-Hamadani is exempt from this charge.

In the end of this *Maqama* he has recited a verse which means that Abul Fath has got no dwelling place for himself. If he passes his night in *hadj*, he passes his day in *Hofaz*. Thus his wandering for the sake of money is related through this verse. Al-Hamadani has ~~revealed~~ *revealed* his own opinion in this *Maqama*.

In *Maqamat Al-Makfoofia*, Abul Fath appears in the guise of a man who is unable to see, the *Maqama* itself is called after the word 'Makfoof' which means incapability of sight. He (Abul Fath) delivered a speech in a crowd and then receives a dinar from Isa b. Hisham, he at once craves it, thus his false blindness and deception is revealed. In the last verses he admits himself to be a man of variety and of different forms because he is an opportunist. He is further proud of his mean profession which is begging and mendicancy as time, so as it itself is mean and base. He again starts to revel time with folly, because time is worth kicking and one should not be

---

deceived by reason for reason is nothing but madness. These verses fully explain the tricks played by the mendicants and beggars in the age of al-Hamadhani. They also describe the necessity owing to which they were compelled to wander and beg.<sup>54</sup>

Al-Bukhari, is also named after a place called Bukhara. Abul Fath appears in the mosque of Bukhara along with a lad. He relates his poverty and misfortune of the day. At last he receives a ring as a gift from 'Isa b. Hisham. As soon as he concludes praise of the said ring in his verse, he leaves the place and his description is revealed. All these tricks which are played by Abul Fath in his Maqamat, proves that life in those days could not be passed with application of such mean practices, to which they were compelled by cruelty of time and careless attitude of the rich towards the poor.<sup>55</sup>

Al-Qasmani, is named after a Persian town of Balad-al-Jabal called Qasvain. Al-Hamadhani produces his fine speech through Abul Fath when he appears before the audience as a warrior.<sup>55</sup> On this occasion he speaks fluently and relates that he has left the residence of unbelievers (Balad al-Tuf) and has reached Qasvain. He recites some verses in the end which means that he moves with time and his pedigree is also in the hand of time which changes in accordance with it. Sometimes he belongs to 'Maboot'.<sup>56</sup> Abu Dulf, a contemporary poet of al-Hamadhani has named some of the leaders of this class among whom 'Hafsavayh, 'Yahia' are all named. According to al-Thalibi they are 'Nabati' and not Arabs. They are called

---

54. Abduhu Sharah Maqamat p 75, 79

55. Ghazawi Al-Adab p 234

56. 'th Thalibi Yatiim p 112 vol. 2



mendicancy and were unable to speak in Arabic. Some other poets of this era have also related the accounts of this class, who begged and wandered from place to place. It is also described that they were robbers and were similar to the gang of Sasanids. However, this thing is quite certain that these people earned their livelihood by means of mendicancy and begging. Al-Nasabdhani has again pointed out beggary and poverty prevalent in his age and has pointed out that people earned their living through it. No doubt, his Maqamat are social records of his age which reveal general condition of the life of common individuals.

One of the most significant of all Maqamat is, al-Safania. It begins when the narrator, 'Isa b. Hisham lands in Damascus, one of the glorious cities in the Abbasid regim. At this place he observes an army of Sasanids (i.e. Banu Sasan) who had tied their hands with cloths and had put on red garments. The leader of this gang was ahead of them. All of them were beating their cheeks with the tones. Their leader (Abul Fath) then begins to recite verses and names certain things which he requires. After he achieves some Sarahim from the narrator he begs others for additional alms. In the end, it is disclosed that the leader's name is Abul Fath al-Aksandari, who again recites some verses mentioning that time is hard and fools are better than witty persons.<sup>57</sup>

After relating the text in brief, it is essential to relate about the Sasanids who had achieved prominence in the days of Al-Nasabdhani. Almost each Maqama refers to some extent to the activities of this group, hence it can be said

one of the most important topics to be dealt with at this stage. Al-Hamadhani and Hariri both have pointed out evils and vices of this class. No doubt, 'Aqarat in respect of these circles round mendicancy and the greatest mendicant class of people were the Sassanids<sup>58</sup> during the Abbasid reign.

The compiler of al-Maqama<sup>59</sup> states that in the age of al-Hamadhani, there was a group of persons known as mendicants or beggars (al-hab-al-kudhi). They were called Sassanids referring to Sasan. Sasan was a prince whose father was an ancient king of Persia, and he had deprived his (Sasan) of his country. It is also said that Sasan was a king and Loro, one of the Persian kings, had snatched his properties. At last he began to beg and mendicate. Two poets of Sassanids were recited in the age of al-Hamadhani. Al-Jhalibi has described them in his 'Aqarat, in two long chapters. They were al-Ahnaf-al-'Ajabri and Abu 'Ulayf al-Khasraji. The former declared himself a poet of mendicancy and their 'Aqarat. He also wrote a big 'Asida in which he disclosed the art of mendicancy and beggary together with their plots and particular words (vocabulary). Abu 'Ulayf states that he was a poet of manifold virtues. He has also cited several examples of mendicancy and beggary through his story wit. He has also written a 'Asida like the 'Asida of al-Ahnaf about beggary and its particulars. Al-Hamadhani has expressed his due attachment with these poets and has also related their verses in his 'Aqarat e.g. Abul Fath recites some verses in the first 'Aqama named al-Qarisi, which belongs to Abu 'Ulayf. In these verses

58. Ghazawi al-'Adab no 209, 211, 212, 214, 222, 224

59. Zayf al-Maqama no 20 to 25

he complains against time and advises to change oneself with the change of time. Likewise in Maqamat al-Musafyha he has related in prose the contents of both Qasidas of Abu Dulaf and al-Ahnaf-al 'Ukbari along with the plots of beggars related to them. Al-Hamedhani has further named one of the Maqamat<sup>as</sup> al-Sasani. In this Maqama Abul Fathal-Akandari is the greatest Sasani, and in several other Maqamat he is a learned and witty Adib (Litterateur)<sup>60,61,62,63</sup>

According to Thomas Chenery 'Sasan-al-Akhbar son of Bahman son of Isfendiya, son of Kushtasif, prince of western Persia, is ther oputed chief and patron of all beggars and mountebanks. The legend is that Bahman being near his death, sent for his daughter Howaya, who was pregnant, and settled the possession on her and her child, if it should prove a boy, to the exclusion of his own son Sasan. Sasan indignant of this, left the court, and lived the life of a shepherd among the Khurds, so that his name passed into a proverb for one who leads a vagabond life hence the people of Sasan the Kurd is a person signifying beggars, prestigiators, people that go about with dogs, monkeys and the like. These people had a coin of their own which was not thought worthy of study and invitation by the learned men of the time. One Abu Dulaf wrote a Qasida in their language, which is said to have supplied Hariri with many of the terms used in the 30th Assembly.<sup>64</sup>

60. Ahmed Amin Zuhar-al-Islam pp 141 to 146 vol. 1

61. Al-Rafa'ie Tarikh Adab pp 96, 97

62. Ath Thalibi Yatima pp 174, 182, 185 vol. 3

63. Ath Thalibi Yatima pp 202, 216, 287 vol. 2

64. Chenery Assemblies pp 287, 288

"Sharishi gives another account of the origin of this term. He says that after the Persians had been subdued in the time of Khalifa Umar and عثمان, they submitted peacefully to the conquerors adopting their manners and religion, and they being a clever artful people they betook themselves in various ways of making their living, one of which was mendicancy. Their way of exciting commiseration was to give out that they belonged to the royal house of Sasan, or as we call them, the Sassanids, and to describe the cruel changes of fortune and their fallen condition, so that at least people came to call a beggar a sassani. This may be the true derivation of the word, but it is evident from 19th Assembly, that Hariri adopts the legend which makes Sasan a real person."

64

In the opinion of Ahmed Amin, there was a class of person who was known as Al-Sassanoun or 'AHL-al-Tudun' or 'Banu Sasan'. There are many legends about Sassanids. Some have held that it is spoken for Sasan, the son of Isfandiyyar; but it is also used for those who mendicate or beg, as it is a proverb that 'a certain person belongs to Banu Sasan'. There is a second legend about it which reveals that Sasan was an Ajam king whom Dara had defeated and captured his kingdom, hence he became a beggar and roamed here and there for alms. Thus it became a proverb. The third legend discloses Sasan as a clever beggar who used to mendicate and get charities. The fourth legend relates that there was a gang of persons who used to make their living in cities and towns by means of cheating. Some of them were also capable of producing literature. They begged by playing tricks and defrauding them. Their literary output is called 'Adbacia' in Egypt. This class of people was found in the age of al-Hanadani since early time and this

was the main reason of production of modern literature in Arabic  
58,60,62,63,65,66  
in the form of Maqamat.

He further names two eminent poets of Sassanids who were contemporary of al-Hamadani. They were Ahnaf al-'Ukbari and Abu Dulaf al-Khazraji. Ahnaf was the poet of Sassanids in Bagdad who has described their mendicancy and its requisites. Abu Dulaf has also stated the tricks of Sassanids and its essentials. He also went to Rayy, met Al-Sahab b. 'Abbad and rendered many cities with mockery and deception. The chief language of Sassanids its proverbs and cantare called 'Munakat manu Sasan'. It cannot be understood by others. Al-Thalibi has stated in 'Yatima'<sup>62</sup> that al-Sahab b. 'Abbad had fully learnt their lexicon. 'Munakat' means doing something which makes others angry; the sequel is that their false show could award them property and wealth by playing tricks.

Writing about mendicancy the compiler of 'Tarikh Adab al-'Arab' states that among Arabic poets there were Sa'aleek, 'Shatrat' and 'Mutalassessoon'. But they were not mendicants. The difference is that those who were 'Shatrat', i.e., used to take property forcibly, while mendicants begged with humility. Later on, when the Arabs captured the Persians and mixed with them, those who were wicked they began to beg through mendicancy and they were known as man Sasan. The Sassanids earned their livelihood through various tricks. Among the Sassanid poets in the 4th century A.D. Ahnaf al-'Ukbari and Abu Dulaf are well known.<sup>61</sup>

---

65. Ahmed Amin Duhal Islam p. 136 vol. 1

66. Ahmed Amin Duhal al-Islam p. 10, 32, 95 vol. 2.

Al-Thalibi states about Abu Dulaf that he had accompanied al-Sahab b. 'Abbad and both of them were talking in Sassanid term (cant) which no other person could understand. Al-Sahab b. 'Abbad had learnt their 'Munsak' as well. Al-Hamadani has quoted several verses of Abu Dulaf in his Maqamat. In his Qasida named al-Sassania, Abu Dulaf has said that he had seen wonders of time and he belonged to the class of 'Sahaleel' who were 'Danu Sasan' mendicancy and begging for the sake of livelihood in some verses ; some of these tricks are similar to the tricks related in Maqamat al-Hamadani. This Qasida of Abu Dulaf is in praise of Sassanids.<sup>62</sup>

About Annaf al-'Ukbari he says, that he was a Sassanid poet in the city of peace i.e. Bagdad. He himself declared in his verses that he belongs to a high family and was proud of his relationship with Sassanids, who were industrious and witty persons. Their rule spread at Khurasan, Qashan and India, they also governed Rome, Zanz, Balghar (Balakh) and Sindh. The devils and armies were afraid of them; Arabs and Kurd were frightened to be their foes. When a robber attacked a rich man and he warned them of his being a mendicant they used to immediately release him from their custody. Abu Dulaf in his Qasida 'Al-Sassania' has referred to this poet, Annaf al-'Ukbari and has described Sassanid's mendicancy.<sup>63</sup>

In the aforesaid verses, Annaf has already related the powerful influence of these beggars. He has also stated about extension of their authority to the farthest land and their influence on other nations.

---

11. Qanawi remarks that the literature of mendicancy represents a large number of persons in the age of Sasanians. It was a means of livelihood for mendicants, who had faced tyranny of time and were unable to obtain other sources for passing their life. Therefore, they created various tricks for an easy going life without care of humility and meanness. He again states that a class of beggars was well known in that period, which was called 'Sasanis' or 'Banu Sasan' and it refers to a man named Sasan. It is also said that he was the son of Isfendiyar, whose father had given his country to his daughter. On this, Sasan had become a shepherd. Later on it was used for mendicants. It is also related that he was an Ajam king, whom Dara had dispossessed from his kingdom and he had become a wanderer and beggar, thus it became a proverb. It is also noted that Sasan was an experienced beggar, who was expert in begging through mendicancy and deception. Hence all mendicants were known by the name of Sasan.<sup>58</sup>

Al-Shaikh Mohd. 'Abdulu in 'Mabarak Maqamat al-Hamdhani states that Banu Sasan were witty beggars. It is said that Sasan was an experienced beggar who was sharp in mendicancy hence mendicants refer to Sasan. In his opinion 'Sasanis' and Banu Sasan and such other words are used as an insult to Sasan, who was grandfather or leader of Sasan people. He came after the downfall of Sasanid empire and was of Persian origin whose founder was Ard Shersabak. When Islam destroyed them some of their individuals were living in neighbouring places, whom the first muslim conqueror had dishonoured and humiliated. So they

---

wandered from place to place and were called by the title of their fore-fathers. In early times their reference to Sasan was a matter of honour and regard, which became humility and abuse by the passage of time. He further says that the reason of using Sasan as an insult is due to political ground and that is to show the victory of the conqueror over vanquished persons, so that the accounts of Sassanids rule would not remain in any heart, nor their glory or grandeur would fascinate anyone in future, except to mark their weakness and humility. Thus they showed their superiority by calling them Sassanids. Later on the word Sasan was used for clever and cunning persons, who were the lowest class of people. Again he states that he heard some abuse in some cities and he was very much surprised to hear it. Then he wished to know its cause, for example someone was abusing his son due to his some negligence and was calling him with the name of Barmaki.... the reason behind it was that the Abbasids after the downfall of al-Barmaki, called them either Barmaki as a mark of insult to them. Such was the case of Sassanids who had no helper or friend after Islam had conquered Persia.<sup>57</sup>

Al-Hamadhani in his Maqamat has presented the common life of his age, just as the celebrated poets who were contemporary of al-Hamadhani, namely Aghaf al-Ubairi and Abu Dulaf have cited about Sassanids, their lexicons, etc. in their verses. Abu Dulaf in his Qasida 'Sassania' has related the life of Sassanids, their manners, faiths convictions and everything about them in a particular way. This is the best source to acquire knowledge about the social condition of that time. In some way or other it is justified to opine that Maqamat is a



kind of Salsaka-Literature i.e., Literature of Satanlook or robbers or mendicants. Al-Hamadani's Abul Fath, who had a great experience of world, had seen vicissitudes of time and had met different classes of people, has reproduced all these matters in the best literary style which remained unsurpassed till Maqamat Hariri came into existence.

In Al-Qarfa,<sup>67</sup> when 'Ibn b. Hisham comes in the city of Basra i.e., Bagdad, he sees a crowd of people on the bank of river Tigris where Abul Fath in the guise of a juggler was going to dance like a monkey. In his last verse he (Abul Fath) says that changes of time had compelled him to play on tricks and a mendicant could not be a fool. In this shortest Maqama, Al-Hamadani has again related one of the tricks of making livelihood, he never blames himself in any Maqamat for adopting the meanest vocation of mendicancy and beggary, because he deems that time had compelled him to practice such shameful vocation. On the other hand, it was a trick of mendicants to fascinate others by various tricks and collected money.

Al-Musalla is named after Musall, which is situated on the eastern side of river Tigris. Abul Fath, in the guise of a mendicant, strongly declared to make dead persons alive and ultimately displays his tricks by making a dead person alive. His mendicancy becomes effective on the audience and he secures necessities of life from them as much as he can. In the end, when his tricks are met with failure, he recites some verses mentioning that he is a peerless figure of his time, who uses to obtain his living through falsehood and fraud.<sup>68</sup>

---

67. Abdumu Sharah Maqamat p. 93

68. Abdumu Sharah Maqamat no 95, 101.

This Maqamat too produces the life of a man like Abul Fath, who in each Assembly gets money etc. from the people of his time. He never meets disappointment. The social condition of the common people during the Buwayhids was indeed unfair and complicated but it was successful for mendicants, who had adopted numerous ways of cheating their people and getting necessities of life. Thus it is evident from the fact that Maqamat are a tool for displaying mendicancy just as other Sa'ika literature has presented this theme.<sup>69</sup>

Al-Ma'zeera is called after a dish 'Ma'zeera' (i.e. a dish which is prepared with meat and curd), 'Isa b. nishan and Abul Fath are seen in Basra where a banquet is held in which merchants are also invited. 'Ma'zeera' is one of the items served on the table for the guests. At this, Abul Fath relates an incident of Baghdad due to which he has disliked Ma'zeera. The incident refers to Baghdad, whose pomp and glory is described by Abul Fath. He mentions 'Isa b. nishan, al-Basri as one of the famous makers of the gates; refers to a market of Baghdad, where fancy articles are sold (Suq-al-Tar'if); relates about the coins of Al-Mu'izz-Dil-Aliyah al-Basri, the ruler of Egypt, and Asad al-Furata mentions a powerful man of Baghdad. One of them was appointed as minister of al-Muqtadir in the beginning of the 10th century A.H. Later on, he was disconsured and his properties were attached. This fact al-Hamadhani refers in his account of Baghdad together with other historical references of his age which evidently prove that he produces a picture of his own era. Further he names one of the reputed gates of Baghdad called as

'Bab-al-Taq', which was made by Abu'I-mun-al-Hasuri, and describes about two well known places of Iran namely 'Abrajan' and 'Jurjan'. Both of these towns were famous for fabric and embroidery at that time. Besides a good number of vessels and pots such as basins and others are stated with a reference to Iraq and Syria. In the end he praises Bagdad and its grandeur for its comfortable and luxurious things, variety of dishes etc. At last Abul Fath refused to take Maseora because some boys have named him after it and he had hit a stone on one of them as a result of which he was imprisoned for two years. The Maqama ends with the note of his motherland, Hamadhan that its natives are sympathetic and kind hearted.<sup>70,71</sup>

Al-Hamadhani has, indeed, produced his Maqama with a unique spirit of recreation. In this Maqama too the entertaining quality is already visible along with its certain references to Abbasid period.

Al-Hirza, is named after relief or remedy which Abul Fath has prepared to give Isa b. Hisham if the latter pays him some dinars as a price of that relief. Al-Hamadhani introduces a place named 'Bab-al-Abwab in this Maqama. It is one of the frontiers of 'Bahr-al-Káidr'. It is called 'Bab-al-Abwab because its gates are made of iron. The sea voyage, its terror and other horrible sights are beautifully depicted by al-Hamadhani. In the end, he recites some verses relating his poverty and praising his patience.<sup>72</sup>

In al-Muristania, al-Hamadhani opposes atheists and supports Ahl i. Sunnat. He further starts a bitter campaign

70. Abduh Sharah Maqamat p 101

71. Zayf al-Maqama pp 34 to 42

72. Abduh Sharah Maqamat pp 116, 119, 125

against Mu'tazila. A clear picture of it is found in this Maqama when a mad man visits 'Isa b. Hisham and a mu'tazilite philosopher named Abu Daud in the lunatic asylum (Maristan) of Baora. At this place, the said mad man strongly criticises Mu'tazila and their notions. Al-Hamadani has presented his personal disgust for Mu'tazila and has taunted in harsh words. In the end he recites a few verses saying that he is a storm of winds and bewilderment has given him high rank, he agitates that he belongs to Alexandria or has wandered from place to place and has appeared everywhere in a new guise. <sup>72,73</sup>

In Al-Majma' 'Isa b. Hisham goes to Baghdad in the year of famine, meets Abul Fath and invites him at a dinner. A good deal of dishes and various sorts of varieties are described in it. In the end Abul Fath says that he belongs to Alexandria and due to cruelty of time he is roaming about. This Maqama gives a reference to hunger and beggary prevailing at that time in the shape of an year of famine, but the fact is that Baghdad was a place of poverty and beggary for the poor, whereas it was a place of luxury and all sorts of comfort for the rich. The numerous scenes related in this Maqama point <sup>out</sup> to the pomp and glory of the rich, who had everything of rest and comfort at their disposal. Al-Hamadani has really produced a true picture of his time, the difference between the rich and the poor, unequal distribution of wealth and such other causes are described by him in his all Assemblies including this

Assembly.

73. Bayr Al-Maqama p. 29

74. Abduhu Sharah Maqamat p. 125.

In Al-Madina Abul Fath delivers a religious sermon similar to that noted in Sharh Al-Mawazih. It is one of the finest speeches that he has given at Basra where 'Isa b. Hisham along with others are assembled. Several verses are recited and people are encouraged to do good deeds and remember their death. Al-Hamadani has presented his informant Abul Fath, in the guise of a highly educated and religious leader. His marvelous and eloquent discourse before the gathering at Basra is one of the most celebrated discourses so far as religious and virtuous deeds are concerned. Even in this pious Assembly Al-Hamadani does not forget to close it without candor when Abul Fath appears in his true form and throws away the veil of mockery from him. 74,75

In Al-Asadiah, Abul Fath is entertained by 'Isa b. Hisham in a village. Abul Fath in the guise of an Arabian youth recites excellent verses showing that he is master in all sorts of poetry and is able to amaze him by his poetry. He further describes his poverty and need and asks some help because time is unkind to him and he is making his living through deception and mockery. 76

In al-Iraqia, 'Isa b. Hisham is seen in one of the chief places where literary circles are prosperous and their attainment in the field of literature is generously appreciated and regarded by the amirs, Governors and the rich. It is Iraq where litterateurs are seeking for their means in the courts of the pompous rulers whose administration is not free from various drawbacks, but literary pioneers who have attached

---

75. Zayf Al Maqamat p. 28.

76. Abulhu Sharh Maqamat p. 27

themselves with any court, all satisfied with their own achievements.

Al-Maqamat include many themes, literary criticism is also one of them. In Maqamat Al-Iraqia, Al-Sharia, and Al-Tariz Al-Hamadani has laid down literary matters concerning poets and their poetry. Through Abu Zayd many verses of many poets are recited in this Maqama. The reference to Baghdad by Abul Fath tells how literary persons are attracted to this place because of the bounty offered by the Abbasid rulers on these persons.  
76,77

Al-Hamadani's Abul Fath arrives in shabby garment in this Maqama stating that he belongs to 'Ibb and his birth place is Alexandria. In his verses the cruelty of time, his hardships and miseries are related for the sake of getting charities and alms.

In Al-Hamadani's 'Ibb has attended the court of Sayf al-Daula b. Mardan who died in the year 356 A.H. A horse is brought before him and he wants that someone should relate its qualities in the best manner. Then Abul Fath comes forward and describes all qualities of the said horse in the most decorated and well rhymed prose. He surprises all by his amazing oratory. He tells about himself that he belonged to Egypt and his home is Alexandria, situated on the coasts of Spain. In his verses he speaks of cruelty and torments and requires financial aid.  
78,79

---

77. Zayf Al-Maqama p. 27

78. Abul Fath Maqamat pp 156, 157

79. Zayf Al-Maqama pp 21, 23, 24.

The court scene of Sayf al-Daula and the literary output by Abul Fath for the best description of a horse, rates it one of the most magnificent assemblages of unique style which al-Hamadani has ever produced. Al-Hamadani has, no doubt, wished to produce the occurrences of his own period which in some way or the other reflects the social condition of the people. In this respect veracity or falseness of narration is not material. What is really important, are the references to the personages and particulars of a certain period, and al-Hamadani has attempted to depict the common life of his own time. According to Brockelmann, it is "purely lexicographical interest, which deals with a competition instigated by Sayf al-Daula for the best description of a horse."

Al-Rusafi<sup>78,79</sup> is named after a place near Raqqa, called 'Rusafa' while the seat of Caliphate was at Baghdad. 'Rusafa' is also well known place in the east of Baghdad. But according to Sheikh Abd al-Aziz, the former place is meant in this Maqama. The narrator 'Ibn al-Arabi goes to Baghdad in the hot days of summer. There he meets Abul Fath and his companions who began to talk about many types of thieves and their various ways of committing theft, of cheating, deceiving and robbing in several places of the Islamic Empire. The whole Maqama revolves round thieves and their wicked practices, which were popular in the age of al-Hamadani. Though he has especially named one of his Maqamat by the title of 'Rusafa', yet the different classes of thieves, robbers, deceivers and vandals are described in detail in this Maqamat. It contains erotic jargon and court language.

It is already noted that Chatter, Mutaladdeen, Sa'aleh and Ayyaroon were playing their mischievous parts in the whole territory of Islamic empire, particularly in Baghdad, Iraq and other adjacent places. Ibn-al-Athir has remarked that Ayyaroon were spread in the Islamic empire of this period. They were powerful and many of them had occupied respectable positions such as ministerial etc. Sometimes they were called by the name of 'Shattar'. They put on their particular robes and their good deeds, if any, were counted as virtues. In those persons and their different roles in different forms al-Hamadhani has specially mentioned in his Maqama al-Mu'alla. <sup>81-85</sup>

In al-Neghsalia, 'Isa meets Abul Fath and his comrades in Basra. Abu Fath's mendicancy is revealed by his companion in some fine verses. This Maqama mentions the character of Abul Fath who has always some tricks with him in order to earn his living. <sup>86</sup>

Al-Sherazie, is called after a place known as Sheraz, a city of Iran. 'Isa b. Hisham returns from Yemen for his homeland. As soon as he reaches Sheraz he meets an old man who relates his sufferings due to his wedding with a woman and afterwards a daughter was born to her. Thus Abul Fath receives some alms from 'Isa b. Hisham and leaves for another place. <sup>86</sup>

---

81. Al-Rafa'ie Tarikh Adab p 96

82. Ahmed Amin Zuhar al-Islam p 111, 115 vol. 1

83. Ath Thalibi Yataim p 174, 216, 216, vol 1 and 11

84. Ahmed Amin Zuhar al-Islam p 10, 32 vol. 2

85. Ghazawi al-Adab p 209, 211, 212, 214, 224

86. Abul Sheraz Maqamat p 165, 168, 172



Al-Molwanis, is named after Molwan a city of Iraq, 'Abul Fath appears in the guise of a barber, asks 'Isa b. Hisham about his motherland and as he hears from him <sup>that</sup> he belongs to him, a place of Iran, he greets 'Isa for good, because ~~him~~ as he states, is a sect of Ahl-e-Sunnat wal-Jam'at. Al-Molwandani being a staunch follower of Ahl-e-Sunnat, reflects his personal faith in them and thus he ridicules Mu'tazilites and other sects. His enmity with his contemporary Al-Jaharizmi does also reveal this point. In his former ~~work~~ namely Al-Karimania Al-Molwandani has clearly declared his contempt for Mu'tazilites, Shi'ites and others.

Al-Molwandani in this ~~work~~ through 'Abul Fath al-Molwandani, presents his strong opposition for all classes of people, except Ahl-e-Sunnat. <sup>86,87</sup>

Al-Molwandani meets 'Isa b. Hisham. In this ~~work~~ 'Isa entertains 'Abul Fath as a guest who has attracted him through his cheerful and elegant conversation. In the course of talk between them, to recall the former days of 'Isa and other poets, 'Abul Fath takes his food as much as he can and departs. <sup>88</sup>

In Al-Molwandani, there is no reference to the past or present condition of people, but for being itself unique example for later writers on this topic, is glorious. The Assembly commences when 'Isa meets a satan in the valley Jinn where his camel loses its way and he goes there in search of the said animal. There an old man has asked him to recite Arabic poetry, 'Isa then recites the verses of 'Isa b. 'Isa,

---

87. Ghazali Al-Adab p. 185

88. Abul Fath al-Molwandani p. 177, 182

Lebid and Surfa but he is not pleased with their poetry. Upon this the old man recites his own verses. At this, 'Ias is absolutely surprised to find how nicely he has imitated Jarik's poetry. In the end the old man disappears after showing his merits in poetry.

As a matter of fact the first writing on this subject i.e. Satan and unseen world is noticed in *Maqamat al-Iblis*. Even in this strange assembly Abul Fath does not give up cheating and accuses cruelty of time which has compelled him to play on tricks and earn livelihood by fraud. <sup>88, 89</sup>

In *al-Armeenia*, 'Ias and Abul Fath meet in *Maragha* a town of *Azerbijan*. The latter puts dirty and shabby clothes on him, relates his miseries and takes his meals. In the end he recites some verses about poverty and prosperity, because every one has to face either of these two conditions. <sup>90</sup>

In *al-Hajeria* Abul Fath meets 'Ias in a night when the latter accompanies with his friends. Abul Fath talks about himself that he belongs to Yemen and is facing hardships due to poverty. In his verses he names his patron *Shahid b. Ahmad* of *Sajistan* who shall offer him gifts. He further speaks of *Ararjan* a city of Persia, where he shall also receive rewards from *Shahid b. Ahmad*.

In this *Maqama* as well as in some other *Maqamat al-Hamadani* patron *Shahid b. Ahmad* for his generosity and always expects that he shall get some gifts from him. Abul Fath in these *Maqamat* which are in praise of *Shahid b. Ahmad* represented *al-Masudhali* and has conveyed his message abroad.

---

89. *Maqamat al-Hamadani* pp 30 to 32

90. *Abdun Shari* *Maqamat* pp 237, 171

Al-Muradhani proceeded to the court of Sajistan, Khalif b. Ahmad who lived from 344-399 A.H. in his epistles and in his six Maqamat, he has praised him highly and has related his virtues and superiority to other Amirs and kings. In those Maqamat mendicancy and begging are not found, they circle on praise and bounty of the said Amir, to whom an eulogistic eulogy (of Muradhani) the whole collection was dedicated,<sup>91,92</sup> this only point which one gains from them, is attachment of a learned figure like al-Muradhani with the Amir of Sajistan, because of his generosity towards him. The condition of people in general was so painful in the age of al-Muradhani that poets and other literary persons were bound to join the courts of rulers, Governors and Amirs.

Al-Khatifa is named after Khalif b. Ahmad, the Amir of Sajistan, the place where 'Isa b. Nishapur meets 'Abul Fath is shown at Meera. This Maqama like the former is in praise of the said Amir.<sup>93,94</sup>

Al-Nisaburi, is named after Nisapur, a city of Iran, this Maqamat is one of the most significant Maqamat which discloses the maladministration of judiciary and its judges (Qazis) during the Abbasid period. In the words of al-Muradhani when 'Isa b. Nishapur goes to the mosque of Nisapur for Friday prayer, he sees a man wearing Qiansara of Gahl (i.e. Dances, a particular cap for the Gahles) and putting on turban of Ahl-i-Sunnat. On enquiry about him one of them replies, "that he is like a worm which ruins the property of orphans; a locust which eats unlawful harvest; a thief who breaks into the treasure of Auwqaf"

91. Sayf al-Maqamat pp 15, 25, 27

92. Introduction and Foreword of Taleem v. 1

93. Abulhu Farah Maqamat pp. 196, 199

94. Sayf al-Maqamat pp 15, 25, 27, 29, 30.

(Dedication for religious objects); a Kurd (a mean person interested to take away men's properties by looting and searching) who came with his belongings; a wolf that tears human beings when they are crying for help or he wears them in the guise of a devotee of God; he has not been seen as a person but as given up his religion; he has abandoned his gun (weapon); sharpened his hand and tongue and has cut short his mustache in order to show his sacredness; has enlarged his robe so that he could hunt others' properties; has displayed good counsels in his arguments and has concealed vices; has hidden evils, whitened his beard and blackened his head, thus he has shown his holiness and concealed his evilness."

This is the picture of a Qazi in the eye of al-Hamadani. The appearance shows his greatness in religious and pious duties while internally he is badly corrupted. A large number of Qazis, jurists, traditionists, poets and other literary figures possessed no character and were seen involved in various sorts of evils. Among such Qazis and literary figures who were habituated with drinking wine, having children or partners or taking bride etc. are al-Jawhri, Ibn Khallad, al-Mufaddal al-Masri and others. Besides, many kings, emirs and people were usually characterless. Ibn Sukayr, an Abbasid poet has written a satire of al-Jawhri. He has revealed his injustice and cruel acts. Similarly, Ibn al-Layth related injustice of two kings and Qazis in his poetry.<sup>93, 94</sup>

The literature of al-Hamadani is full of numerous irregularities, mistakes, faults and blunders committed by the Qazis in the course of their legal duties on account of various

---

corruptions prevalent at that time. Thus, they used to attach falsely poor persons' properties, acquire waqf estates and snatch other rights of common people for their own benefits. They did not fear anything while doing illegal acts, much less their own responsibility. The Maqamat in fact, depict various features of people's life of his age, for example, their dress, meals, wine and other pastimes showing their habits and ways. All these things are testimony to the fact, that Maqamat al-Ma'madani describe the social life of his time in the best possible manner.<sup>95, 96, 97</sup>

In the end Abu Fath praised Thalif b. Ahmed for his generous gifts for him.

Al-'Ilm is called after 'Ilm' which means knowledge and education. For academic purposes there are many valuable matters in this Maqama. Here Abul Fath states how a student should undertake hard labour to learn and understand everything and to achieve experience of worldly affairs. In his closing verses he says that he belongs to Askaniya and has travelled day and night from place to place. Hence if he has passed night in Syria he has passed his day in Iraq. His wandering refers to the same purpose for which literary figures used to visit from one court to another.

This assembly also points out to the wide recognition of education among all classes of people in the whole Islamic empire of Abbasids. Thus it clearly relates how one should achieve knowledge and try to secure learning.<sup>94 & 98</sup>

- 
95. Qanawi Al-Adab pp 137, 196, 252, 266, 274  
96. Ath Thalibi Yatima pp 116, 117 Vol. 2  
97. Hitti The Arabs pp 97, 99  
98. Abduhu Sharah Maqamat pp 202, 204.

Al-Hamadhani means a will. In this Maqama Abul Fath has executed a will for his son, so that the latter could learn his advice for his success in business, for the purpose of merchandise and carrying prosperous business those counsels of Abul Fath are very useful, business since its early days was popular everywhere in the Islamic countries, Al-Hamadhani through his Assembly teaches business men of his age to take advantage of his suggestions for the sake of prosperity, and welfare of the State.<sup>98</sup> It also refers to the game of chess, which is an ancient game. In the days of al-Hamadhani chess was commonly played in courts as well as in public houses. In his all Assemblies Al-Hamadhani takes care of the social life and the interest of the people of his time, hence he relates only those subjects which in some way or the other concern with the popular taste of his contemporaries.<sup>99</sup>

His Maqama Al-Saymria (Saymryya) relates a past event of Muhammad Ibn 'Isa al-Saymri, who died in the year 275 A.H. This is the reason that this assembly is called after al-Saymryya, a place in the neighbourhood of Khuzistan. He relates his journey from Sayra to Baghdad in the company of friends, learned men and merchants, on their way to the capital, they take various kinds of dishes such as omelette, minced meat, spicy soup, roasted meat etc. Hear melodious songs from maidens who were of world renown and he is considered the most generous, boldest, wisest, wittiest, eloquent, artful and celebrated poet, who has charm and delight in their

company, but as the wealth is spent by him, none of them enquires about him. These times become hard and he starts travelling like the Christ. He wanders Khurasan, Kirman, Sajistan, Jeelan, Tabristan, 'Uman, Sind, Hind, Egypt, Yemen, Hijaz, Mecca and Ta'if. In all these places which he has visited he learns several things of benefit and experience e.g. good verses, fables, tales, deceivers' fun, mendicancy, foretelling of astronomers etc. For the sake of livelihood he begs people and stores countless wealth and property. On reaching Baghdad he takes twenty kinds of spicy dishes, diverse kinds of ornaments and rare preparations etc.<sup>100, 101</sup>

In this assembly, al-Hamadhani described everything of luxury and comfort which were available in the courts of emir kings and other respectable persons. Various sorts of dishes, songs of maidens, company of Ghilman, wine of Qutuboli (a place of Iraq which was famous for wine) baskets of saffron, Indian swords, blades of Yemen, armour of Sabri, shields of Tibet, spears of Khat, daggers of Barber, fine horses etc are related in this Maqama. They prove how the Abbassids have increased their status by gathering countless things of comfort irrespective of their being Arabian or non Arabian in origin. Side by side their keen interest in the advancement of literature is full of magnificence. But poverty is still rife through wandering of Mohd. b. Ishaq who after having spent his wealth has roamed about mendicating and begging. A corio

---

100. Abū al-Husayn Maqamat p 207  
 101. Zayf al-Maqama p 29

of names of several persons and places show his roaming from place to place in order to make his living. Indeed, *Maqamat Al-Hamadhani* are deeply rooted in the common life of the people of his age. 102 to 104.

In *al-Deonaria*, al-Hamadhani relates all the worst abuses of his age through his vagabond Abul Fath, and a certain person who declares himself as Sasanid. Abul Fath and the said other person abuse each other in the most condemned words, which reflects a new feature of the Sasanid's mendicancy and begging. The *Maqama* again moves round Sasanids and their bad tactics for earning their livelihood. The literature of vices and evils is disclosed through this Assembly. Many learned figures have given examples of such literature in their writings.

The literature of vicious form in prose is presented through the works of al-Sahab b. 'Abbad, al-Husayn al-Hamadhani and others, while in poetry Ibn al-Hajjaj, Ibn Sukarra, Ahnaf al-'Ukbari, Abu Dulaf and some other poets have clearly produced all sorts of vices prevalent in their age. 105-108

In this Assembly, al-Hamadhani refers to miserliness of the people of Ahwaz, who were known for being miser. Likewise, irrelevant and useless talks of the inhabitants of Rayy, are also related. The most striking aspect, which has a personal reference

102. Ahmed Amin Duhai *Islam* pp 292, 294 Vol. I

103. Ahmed Amin *Shahar al-Islam* p 97, 107, 124 Vol. I

104. Ghannawi *al-Adab* pp 115, 119, 120, 250, 252, 266, 281

105. Abdurrahman Sharaf *Maqamat* p. 216

106. Ahmed Amin *Zuhar al-Islam* pp 132, 133, 136, 140, 144, 146

107. Ath Thalibi *Yatima* pp 116, 117, 125, 285, Vol 2, pp 175 to 195 Vol. 3.

108. Ghannawi *al-Adab* pp 250, 252, 266, 274, 278, 281



to his native place, is an account of a mountain of Hamadhani namely, 'Arwand'. It is counted as one of the most outstanding monuments of Hamadhani. Many poets and learned men have related the beauties of Hamadhani in which they have nicely depicted their views about 'Arwand'. Despite his Maqamat contain many themes, al-Hamadhani does not forget to recall his own motherland, whose beauties are always mentioned wherever he finds an opportunity to describe them.<sup>105 to 108</sup>

In al-Sh'eria, al-Hamadhani describes various qualities of poetry, just as he has cited about poets and poetry in his two former Maqamat namely, Al-Iraqia and al-Larizia. In this Maqama, his reference to Syria, Iraq and Basra clearly points out to the literary activities of his time. All these places, including some other centres of literature were really fountains of knowledge and learning in various kinds of literature. Al-Hamadhani no doubt, depicts the literary life of his period at many places in his Maqamat but those three assemblies chiefly belong to literary criticism concerned with poets and poetry. This Maqama is specially named after poetry (Sh'ir).<sup>109, 110</sup>

Al-Mulukia is called after its theme i.e. the accounts of the kings. This Maqama like some other Maqamat, is in praise of Khalif Ibn Ahmed, the Emir of Sajistan. They are not based on Kudia. In this Assembly 'Isa b. Hisham says Abul Fath about the renowned kings of Syria and Iraq and those who are respected amongst them, about the emirs of neighbouring places; about the kings of Egypt; about the virtues of the kings of Yemen; about the delighted affairs of the kings of Te'ef and has also praised Sayf al-Daula. At this, Abul Fath recites some verses

in praise of Khalif b. Ahmed.

109. 'Abdullah Sharih Maqamat p. 222

110. Zayf Al-Maqama p. 27

In this maqama, prose is made equivalent to poetry, because all praise is produced in the form of prose. Till the age of al-Hamadani poetry was the only medium of panegyrists, and they were unable to bring it in any other form. Later on, as it is evident from this Assembly, prose also became a vehicle of Panegyrist and distinction between prose and poetry in this respect vanished totally. All themes of prose were suited to poetry and vice versa.<sup>111, 112</sup>

Al-Sufria is named after a 'Sufri' which is plural of 'Asfar'. It stands for doer. Abul Fath by means of mendicancy obtained another dinner from 'Isa b. nishan. It is one of the shortest of his Assemblies, but the theme of begging and cheating in a new way makes this Assembly meaningful and glorious. In a single verse recited by Abul Fath, he states that noble persons are deceived by mean persons and a generous man is superior to all. Thus he points out to the general condition of his time in which mendicants are playing their parts very successfully.<sup>111</sup>

Al-Jarya is named after a place in Tabristan. Abul Fath in this brief Assembly describes his poverty and praises the Amir of Hajistan Khalif b. Ahmed (344-399 A.D.). Al-Hamadani through Abul Fath highly speaks of the said Amir who had given him a lot of gifts and has removed poverty from him.

This assembly like some other assemblies which are based on panegyric, do not reveal any sort of cheating or deception. The only reference to the general condition of learned persons of that time, is found when they are seen in search of some kings or emirs for the sake of their livelihood. Thus they have always

---

111. Abduhu Al-Maqamat pp <sup>26</sup>25 to 27

112. Bayf Al-Maqama pp 25 to 27

travelled from one court to another. The life of al-Hamadani is an example of this fact. Besides, there were several literary figures who took refuge in some court and passed their life at the will of that Amir or King with whom they had attached themselves. Only a little number of learned persons, kept aloof from worldly affairs and such people suffered hardships during their whole life.<sup>113 to 115</sup>

Al-Tasmeem is named after Abu-al-Hada al-Tasmeeni, a fictitious character through whom al-Hamadani has named Khalif Abu Ahmed the Amir of Sajistan. He recalls the generosity of Khalif b. Ahmed who has passed away from this world and mourns over his sad demise due to which he has fallen into hunger and need. In the last verse he has lamented his misfortune, because if he had not visited Sajistan, he would not have been able to meet the said Amir who was no more. This maqam like the former five Maqamat, is based on panegyric and there is no reference to begging or deception. In the most valuable verses which al-Hamadani has recited in praise of the afore-said Amir of Sajistan, he has lamented on his death as he has supposed him (Khalif b. Ahmed) to be dead. It is nothing but a poetical form of composition in panegyric or it is merely with the object of laying stress on the said great personality whose loss cannot be borne after his death. According to some writers Khalif b. Ahmed lived from 314 to 397 A.H., while al-Hamadani died in the year 398 A.H. It means that the Amir was alive at the time when this 'assembly was composed,

---

113. Abduhu Sharah Maqamat p. 231, 233, 234

114. Ahmed Amin Zuhurul Islam pp 116, 120, 121 Vol I

115. Qanawi al-Adab p. 120

hence the reference to his death is mainly to show his importance and to win his support for himself. Al-Hamadani presented his Assemblies including this Assembly, to the Amir of Tajistan when he was alive.

This Assembly also points out to the duties of a wazir in the age of Al-Hamadani. He was in charge of all ministries and was called the wazir of sword as well as of pen. The communication was very quick and there was no delay in delivering message to the king or the authority concerned. The special officer was appointed to look after the proper and speedy communication. Similarly, there was a special officer for checking the offences and doing justice. According to Ibn Khaldun as cited by E.M. 'Abdun in 'Sharah Maqamat al-Hamadani, this officer had to perform what wazirs and others were unable to do. He had to go through decrees, evidences, documents etc. and had a more detailed study of all these papers than wazirs. In the days of Caliphs, they themselves did this task or often left it for wazirs. Later on, a ministry was separately formed for this purpose.

Al-Hamadani again, refers to the bad condition of his time. He says that time is kind to fools and strikers and they have achieved prosperity and success, while noble men have various worries and pains of time. Life is charmless for them, because they are facing poverty and need. In such an age, as he says, doing good with anyone is without any return. People in form and dress are looking like human beings, but speaking truly, they do not possess any habit or quality of being human.

this is a true picture of the common people of his age. The rich, amire and kings are pointed out inhuman in qualities and habits, though of course, they resembled human beings in appearance. <sup>113 to 116</sup>

Al-Kharazm is called after Khamar is wine. In this assembly, al-Namadani depicts about the life of revelry and debauchery during the Abbassid period. Drinking was not only the habit of the rich and the poor but it had also become a fashion of the day. Even religious leaders e.g. Qazis, sufies, Imams were habituated with wine and melodious songs of the maidens. They used to hold meetings for this purpose in which all sorts of recreations were found. The kings and amirs were generally famous for their magnificent courts, decorated with every article of comfort and luxury along with their retinues and chief personalities. Such meetings were held by public men on large scale for their own convenience and enjoyment. Even great religious figures performed their duties in day and passed their night in drinking, hearing songs etc. One of the significant features is evident from this Assembly that wine shops were distinguished with banners so that drunkards could easily reach there by proper recognition. Some of those wine shop keepers were women, and this Assembly mentions one of them and praises her beauty and mentions wine. In the end of this Assembly the vagabond Abul Fath has disclosed that he is a deceiver who has become due to cruelty of time and has made his living by vocation of mendicancy and begging. Al-Namadani in these verses refers to 'Yahama' and 'Yemen', which were well known for mendicancy and begging at that time. As cited by S.M. Abdum 'Yahama' means from the peak of the mountains of Hijaz to the <sup>ocean</sup>

---

But sometimes it consists of all the shores as it faced Najd, however both these places are related in connection with decoration and mackery which were practised by the residents of that place. Abul Fath further states that he suits to every place, because he can change himself according to the change of time and situation and it is a sign of a clever man of his age. In such harsh words, he remarks about the condition and manners of his time, which had compelled him to seek various methods for passing his life.

In this Assembly, the Imam performs his prayer along with others and prohibits them from drinking wine. Meanwhile, he hears a song and before finishing his remaining prayer, he recites proudly that he is a deceiver, who is known everywhere and he can accommodate in any society, regardless whether it is a mosque or  
117 to 121  
an inn.

According to Hitti 'alcoholic drinks were often indulged both in company and in private,.... even caliphs, viceroys, princes and judges paid no heed to the religious injunction, Khawr made of dates, was the favourite beverage,' he again states, 'convivial parties featuring the daughter of the wine' and song were not uncommon. In these drinking bouts the host and guests perfumed their beards with civet or rose water and wore special garments of bright colours. The room was made fragrant by ambergris or clove wood burning in a censer.<sup>122</sup>

- 
117. Abdurrahman Sharrab, Maqamat pp 235 to 242  
118. Ahmed Amin Zuhar, al-Islam pp 97, 107, 109, 124, 136, 140 Vol. I  
119. Ahmed Amin Zuhar, al-Islam p. 17 vol. 2  
120. Ghannam Al-Adab pp 51, 196, 234, 250, 252, 281  
121. Ahmed Amin Zuhar, al-Islam pp 104, 105  
122. Hitti the Arabs pp 96, 97

All these facts prove that drinking in public as well as in private was common in that era. From the highest to the lowest class of people many vices, such as drinking, music, beautiful maidens, 'Ghilmans', gambling, bribery and other sort of rivalries were usually found. Al-Hamadhani in his ~~magnum~~ refers to these evils of society which had already developed in the Islamic empire and there was no remedy to get rid of them. Again it had become a fashion of the age to take interest in those things and to adopt such ways.

Al-Matalaba means objects. Al-Hamadhani refers to the two treasures of ancient emperors and kings of 'Amalaga who had ruled in Syria and in the neighbourhood of Asia minor and he further relates about rulers of Persian empire such as Kiser and others. Abul Fath in the midst of 'Isa and his friends announces that if anyone desires to know about those treasures he is willing to disclose the secret on getting some reward from him. By this trick he obtains money and postpones his meeting for the next day. Meanwhile 'Isa b. Hisham recognises him and asks about his appearance in disguise. Then Abul Fath recites some verses in which he declares himself a tyrant of time, <sup>t</sup>who has many follies and being penniless earns his living through deceiving the ignorant people. Thus he praises mendicancy and begging which is necessary for passing life easily and peacefully. In the beginning of this Assembly al-Hamadhani again, points out the differences between the rich and the poor, unequal distribution of wealth and hardships of the common people of his age. He firmly declares that

---

properties in possession of wisers and uneducated class, while noble men and learned figures are rolling in hunger and poverty. They have only noble pedigrees, vast knowledge and excellent bearing at their command. This shows the common trouble and worries prevalent during the Abbasid reign.<sup>123 to 126</sup>

His last Maqama is named al-Bishrya. There is one of very interesting stories depicted by al-Mas'udi, which is based on the occurrences of his own time. The Maqama narrates an incident of Bishr Ibn 'Uwana al-'Abidi who was a Sa'lok (i.e. a thief or robber). He had attacked a party, abducted a beautiful woman and praised her beauty. Later on, he came to know from the said woman about the excellent beauty of his own cousin sister. He approached his uncle for marriage who, ultimately fixed a dowry of one thousand she-camel of the tribe of Khuz'a'a. The object of his uncle by this plan was that he would be killed by a lion, named Daz, and if unfortunately he escaped, then he would be killed by a serpent, on his way to the tribe of Khuz'a'a. Briefly, the aforesaid robber saved himself from all dangers and killed both dreadful animals. At last, the son of his abducted wife attacked him and he was again quite safe. Bishr stated that a serpent always bears a serpent and then married his cousin sister to his son from the abducted wife.

The theme of this Maqama refers to the incidents of a class of robbers who used to loot the property of others, abduct

---

123. Abduhu Sharah Maqamat p. 243

124. Ahmed Amin Zuhar al-Islam pp 116, 141 vol. I

125. Ahmed Amin Zuhar al-Islam pp 95, 269 vol. 2

126. Ghazawi al-Idab pp 118 to 120.



where on open roads in broad daylight and a state of trouble and confusion in the capital as well as in the neighbouring places of the Abbasid empire. In the words of Ahmad Amin, there had been a class of people who used to create disorder and turmoil in the country. They always wanted to ruin the capital of Abbasids, those people harassed others, committed assassinations, kidnappings of children and women from streets and no king or ruler could stop their illegal and immoral activities. He again states, that due to bad economic condition, two notable features had appeared in this age. Firstly, the appearance of *ghasawaf* (mysticism) for people had become disappointed and dejected. Secondly, it was the emergence of a class of persons called *'ashatir'* who began commit highway robbery and theft. Such persons had also imposed taxes on others and if they were not paid, they were invaded by them. He further relates that there were *'ayyaroos'* in the Islamic empire of this period. These thieves or robbers had their particular territories. Ibn al-Athir has described that *'ayyaroos'* were found in all Islamic cities. They were honoured in societies and many of them were viziers and held high ranks.

In the aforesaid assemblage al-Jahiz has depicted the social condition of his age. Their manners, habits, academic interest, wealth, richness and poverty, religious reforms, literary criticism on prose writers as well as on some poets, culture and

- 
127. Abdurrahman al-Jahiz p. 247  
 128. Ahmad Amin *Uthul Uloom* p. 136 vol. 1  
 129. Ahmad Amin *Uthul Uloom* pp 10, 52 vol. 2  
 130. Al-Naf'ie *Tarikh Aadam* pp 96, 97  
 131. Ash Thalibi *Yatima* pp 174, 182, 185 vol. 3

civilisation, morality and immorality, mendicancy and begging along with his personal expressions, are clearly described. Some of these Assemblies are called after well known places and several interesting subjects are dealt in them which needs one's special attention for their study and perusal.<sup>132 to 137.</sup>

Al-Hariri's Maqamat relating the social life of his age.

Hariri like his predecessor al-Jamahi has composed his excellent Maqamat on the same pattern. Having adopted all means of decoration and adornment, he always points out a scene and its surroundings together with its inhabitants and their vocation. His Maqamat speaks themselves that a scene is the place which he ever keeps in his mind and on which he has constructed them. This framework is so known to him that he very vividly pictures its incidents with charm and delicacy. Here and there references to other Islamic countries are not uncommon. But they are also described by him in a very enduring manner. Their habits, manners and way of life, profession, and other social, literary, political and economic activities are always before him, when he composes his glorious Maqamat.

Thus there is no doubt to imagine that Hariri has produced his assemblies according to the situation and circumstances prevailing during his lifetime in the Islamic countries, etc.

- 
132. Al-Ghalibi Yatima pp 116, 117, 125, 205 to 207 vol. 2  
133. Ghazali al-Adab pp 209, 211, 212, 213, 222, 223, 234  
134. Nayf al-Maqamat pp 20 to 23  
135. Umar Farrukh al-Rasa'il pp 34 to 37  
136. Ahmed Amin Subar al-Islam pp 113 to 146 vol. 1  
137. Chenery Assemblies pp 287, 288

especially in Basra, his native place. The greatest philological historian of the Arabs says in his Prolegomena that the art of composing in verse or prose is concerned only with words, not with ideas.<sup>138</sup> It means that the episodes narrated by al-Hamadani and Hariri have no relation with the social picture of their time and it is words and words alone which they collect and produce in different forms. The incidents are merely accessories and not the primary object of their writers. However, the argument is also not far from truth and it is rightly suggested by the learned author that words are the principal concern of their compilers. Still it is a fact that every writer is the production of his own era in which he has been and bred. Hence, the effect of its culture and civilisation are but natural. No writer can avoid the influences exerted during his period, for he is a creature of his time and has to walk on its path. As the case is such, Hariri is no exception to this general rule. He has also walked on the same course of its companions and comrades with whom he had to pass his life. He has related their virtues and vices, customs and costumes, profession and vocation etc.

A learned writer has observed in his article, on Hariri and his language, thus: 'with the care and refinement of his predecessor, but with a refinement of philological subtlety and wit equally the most ingenious of the Sassanid and a striking poetic gift in addition. It is something of a paradox that with all their formal perfection and qualities of erudition and virtuosity, al-Hariri's sagas, like those of al-Hamadani, are firmly rooted in the common life of the Islamic city, and portray its manners and

---

138. Browne Literary history of Persia vol. 2

its humours so realistically as to constitute one of the most precious documents of the Islamic middle ages.<sup>139</sup>

According to Thomas Cheney 'the assemblies of Hariri are themselves, the best picture of the society of the city. Wherever he may place the scene of his adventure, it is always Basra whose taste he shares or reproves. It was yet from its geographical position a place of wealth and refinement.<sup>140</sup> In his last assembly as he says 'Hariri, celebrating the praises of his native city says 'of your number was he who originated Grammar (or syntax etc). Now here, there were so many commentators, rhetoricians, grammarians, each seeking to surpass the other in subtlety of analysis.<sup>140</sup> Again he remarks about Basra in his last assembly in the following words: 'the author lauds it as the spot where the snail and the camel meet, the sea fish and the lizard, the camel loader and the sailor, the fisher and the tiller. Ample provision seems to have been made for literary pursuits. Several libraries had been founded and the tasteful flocked to read or to discuss the merits of this or that writer.<sup>140</sup> Cheney again states about Hariri's Maqamat and his other works in these words: 'his works are in every respect the most valuable for this, since he represents in his most exquisite and refined form the culture of his age. He was content to do best what others were also doing, and to gain the admiration of his countrymen by excellence in forms of composition with which they were well acquainted.<sup>140</sup>

Undoubtedly, the assemblies display social, economic, religious and literary activities of life of his age, chiefly of

---

139. Encyclopaedia of Islam 2as 10 p 287

140. Cheney Assemblies pp 285 to 288

Basra was populated in the 11th A.H. during the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar. It was the meeting place of the well known rivers, Tigris and Euphrates. It had been then a beautiful city where earning and merchandise had a wide scope of progress. It had also been a prominent political place at that time, just as it was before the birth of Islam. But the Babylon had destroyed its niceties. From geographical point of view, Basra was the centre of business. From every village and town merchants used to fetch their wares to Basra for sale. They had also a good deal of business with India, Africa and neighbouring places of Arabia. Due to this, it had become a chief place, where all activities of life were developing fastly and profitably. A large number of palm trees and canals were found there. One of the famous canals, Al-Basra was wonderful for its beauties where places and gardens were seen at the bank. Al-Halil has called it a 'Valley of Basra.' Hariri in his Asma al-Basra has nicely produced the beauty of this place.<sup>141</sup>

About their religion, Hariri states that they were neither idolaters nor fire-worshippers but they firmly believed in the principles of Islam. Several mosques and tombs of distinguished religious figures were found at Basra.

His Assemblies further produce enough material about their literary activities. Basra then, was a place where the light of knowledge and learning had widely spread. Magnificent schools of literature, were established to comment and discuss books and their writings. In his Assemblies, al-Hulwani, al-Basri, al-Halil and others produced a fine picture of literary meetings of his time at Basra. At one place, he is also proud of Basra, because of its eminent literary figures, who had invented the 'rabic grammar, poetic metres etc.

Besides, he has also described grammatical disputes between the  
141  
Basrians and Kufians.

About Basra and its importance a learned writer named Muhammad Amin al-Khanji has related in his celebrated work called "Munjam-al-'Umrani" that it was a famous place since ancient times. There were numerous eminent men of letters. It was also a place of merchandise since long. In the days of Abbasids its splendour increased and its foundation became more strong. Its palaces and mosques appeared highly glorious. Gradually, its position became next to Baghdad in the whole Islamic empire of the Abbasids. The trade in silk and other fine cloth was in much progress at this place, because it was a central trade where European and non-European countries used to take place at Basra had commercial ties with each other. The exchange of goods between European and non-European countries used to take place at Basra from where those wares were exported to big cities of Asia. Different people of different places used to meet there and the friendship, so far as the question of learning and knowledge is concerned, it is evident from this fact that numerous scholars and jurists were residing there. For the purpose of creation of the Maqamat<sup>by</sup> Hariri and its development during the Abbasid reign, it is a significant point to mention that it was Basra and Basra alone which created outstanding personalities in the annals of Arabic literature throughout the literary world. In the 4th century A.D. a famous school was opened at Basra whose reputation spread everywhere and ample service was done there to the cause of Islam. The members of this school were known as 'Ikhwān-al-Safa'. They developed religious and philosophical knowledge through their works. Their

---

discussion with literary figures of rank in respect of Arabic learning, is well known and is preserved in their writings. Thus there is no wonder how the merits of Christians illuminated Sir 'Alī Hariri <sup>111</sup> gave them his speeches a principal place in his assemblies.

For having a full understanding of the subject, it is incumbent to know the circumstances under which Hariri has composed them. In the words of Thomas J. Henry 'He was already of middle age when the crusaders marched through his country into Syria. Syria had suffered like the whole east from convulsions of the Moslem world, but it was at least spared an incursion of the Christian hordes. Yet it is to the campaign of Baldwin in Syria that the composition of Assemblies is essentially due. The hero of them is represented as an inhabitant of Saruj, a place in the neighbourhood of Edessa, and as having been driven by infidels who had destroyed the city and killed or despoiled all the warriors of God? <sup>112</sup>

A short sketch of the life of the hero of Assemblies-Hariri is essential at this stage in order to show the general condition of people in the nation of Abu Dayf, who has represented the audience of his age and has reproduced their habits, manners, virtues and vices, traditions and customs etc. In fact, as far as the Assemblies go, Sa'ad al-Din, in his article on Arabic literature during the Abbasid period, he states as follows 'His hero is the hero of the town of Saruj, a man of doubtful morals but high education, who spent his life in incessant travels. Making his appearance always in different places, he excites the confidence of people in his ever varying parts. Everywhere he succeeds in getting money from the people, when he comes on and tries his luck in some other part

and with some other audience. Now as a preacher he is admired for his eloquence and make his audience shed tears; now as a lawyer he espouses the cause of an accused and flaunts his skill in jurisprudence; and now he acts as a school master and achieves great success; or in some place he displays his medicine in treating sick people who throng around him in crowds. There is practically no craft in which he cannot display his ability in the ever changing situations. In all these parts he is shown in the Maqama, in which he is made to do the most artistic tricks of style and say the wildest witticisms, in disclosing the rich treasures of the Adab in the different situations. The rabi is an acquaintance of the hero, Harith b. Harman; it is he who relates the Maqamat, the alternate changes and vicissitudes of Abu Sayd; for which reason each of the fifty Maqamas, begins with the words 'thus spoke Harith b. Harman. At the end of the Maqamas this Harith b. Harman who from afar observes his friend's impostures steps up to him and reproaches him for his deceitfulness. Abu Sayd however, reassures his friend in some witty verse and expounds to him the principles of his life. By the end of his life Abu Sayd feels compelled to leave off his adventurous life and walk the path of virtue and truth. He retires to his native town Seruf and spends the last days of his false life with religious exercises. It is in such circumstances that he is met by his friend Harith b. Harman, to whom he bids farewell in affectionate words.<sup>143</sup>

These are the characteristics of the hero and the rabi of Maqamat al-Hariri. So far as the social picture of the common people in the age of al-Hariri is concerned, I shall now relate them briefly to give an idea of his Assemblies. As described earlier,



Hariri's Maqamat move round begging and mendicancy like that of his predecessor al-Hamadhani,<sup>144, 145</sup> but both distinguished writers have also depicted various themes in their Maqamat and a perusal of them clearly shows that they are the greatest masterworks of the Arabic Adab (literature). There are several common themes of al-Hamadhani and Hariri, for example there are two Maqamat on sermon by al-Hamadhani, while Hariri has produced Abu Zayd as a preacher in more than ten Maqamat. There are still some pieces in his Assemblies which excite for virtuous path, noble deeds and condemnation of world etc. His Assembly al-Lamashqiya is the landmark of religious sermons, delivered by Abu Zayd in front of a caravan. The second there is a literary one in which all kinds of arts with mastery in oratory and eloquence, are described. Such literary Assemblies are twelve in number in which Hariri has displayed his unique literary art with a remarkable style. Thus his Assemblies al-Faraghiya, al-Maghribiyya, al-Qahqariyya, al-Raqqa, al-Samarqandiyya, al-Wastia, al-Halabiyya, al-Maseebiyya, al-She'riyya, and three other Assemblies (i.e. 27th, 40th and 47th) relate the literary matters.<sup>146</sup>

In the time of Hariri riddles were in common practice of the literateurs. Sometimes they also tested the presence of mind of the addressee by way of relating qualities of things in riddles. Hariri for this purpose compiled three Maqamat and they are 36th, 42nd and 44th of his Maqamat. One Maqama was specially compiled by him on Grammar. It is called Al-@ba'iyya in which twelve problems of grammar are stated. Similarly he wrote two Assemblies on jurisprudence. The first is named al-Far'ia in which solution of the

---

144. Zayf al-Maqama pp 56, 57

145. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p. 15

146. Zayf al-Maqama pp 57 to 66.

difficulties of inheritance are laid down. The second assembly is called Al-Taibia which refers to Taiba i.e. goodness, in which a hundred problems of jurisprudence with answers are mentioned. <sup>146</sup>

Hariri has further pointed out eminent persons of his era e.g. Al-'Ummamia, an amir of Iraq named Lubas al-Asadi is related. Likewise, there are several other references of that period such as cruelty of governors, scenes of some well known markets, customs and traditions and affairs of certain religious heads who had concealed truth and veracity. Some of his Assemblies are based on entertainment along with their philological and artificial background thus in al-Baghdadia and al-Sacria, Hariri has fully pleased his audience through amusing stories related by him. <sup>147</sup>

From his first assembly to the last Hariri has composed them on a particular pattern, which is astonishing as well as charming due to their excellent formation. His hero Abu Zayd is introduced to his narrator Harith b. Hammar in his first assembly. In 49th Assembly al-Sasania, Abu Zayd discloses his mendicancy and begging prevalent in all parts of the Islamic countries and lastly he tells his son to adopt mendicancy as vocation. Thus the aforesaid hero gives up his adventurous role and his son succeeds to his vagabond life whom he has instructed for his future career. In the last Assembly, Hariri has again presented his hero Abu Zayd in order to give him a chance to bid farewell to his evermeeting narrator Harith b. Hammar. In this way his Assemblies conclude and one feels that they are inter-connected with each other. Although the different subjects of his Assemblies do not, at the first glance, give such an idea of their communion, yet a perusal of their contents clearly reveals that all of them are framed on one uniform basis and

---

146. *Maqamat al-Hariri* pp 51, 52, 68, 71

147  
single narrator.

After citing generally about Hariri's assemblies, I shall now produce briefly the points mentioned in them concerning the social life of the people of his age. They are as follows:

His first Maqama al-Sas'ania is called after Sas'a, the capital of Yemen. In the time of Hariri, it was one of the famous cities as a seat of trade and manufacture and held an important place since early times. Harith b. Hammam goes to Sas'a and sees an old man in shabby dress delivering an excellent speech before the audience. Later on, he comes to know that the speaker is Abu Zayd al-Ghurji. It is one of the finest speeches to which Abu Zayd al-Ghurji has spoken against self-indulgence and has condemned the seekers of the world. In the end he has exhorted to repentance, but he does not himself act upon it. Hariri in this Maqama has introduced his narrator (Ravi) to the hero, Abu Zayd, who always meets him in each assembly and the Ravi always recognises him when he (Abu Zayd) obtains charity by some device. Hence this assembly makes a footing for the compilation of next assemblies.

Harith b. Hammam stands for Hariri himself, who is an inhabitant of Basra, the native town of Hariri. In the version of Abu Zayd all worldly affairs are related and Harith learns these affairs from him. The hero is described by Hariri as a lamp of the poor and crown of literateurs' (Siraj-al-Gaureba wa-Taj al-Utba). This assembly gives an idea of the literary taste of the people during Hariri's age together with their attachment in self-indulgence and achievement of earthly resources for their

---

148. Zayf Al-Maqama pp 52 to 55

149. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 15, 16

150. Chenery Assemblies pp 108, 278 to 282, 285

comfort and luxury. It also produced begging and mendicancy prevalent in all places of the Abbasid empire. According to Chenery 'though alms giving is enjoined on moslems, and beggars are sufficiently numerous amongst them, yet mendicancy is always<sup>150</sup> looked on as humiliating and disgraceful. It is one of those assemblies in which Abu Zayd is presented as a preacher and his religious discourse is the masterpiece of literature. His false role for the purpose of getting alms clearly tells that this assembly too, moves round mendicancy and begging.

His second assembly al-Holwan - a place situated at four stations in the east of Baghdad is named after its founder Holwan b. Ali b. Koba'ah. According to Chenery 'Hariri, in his second assembly gives us a picture of one of these meetings, in which the poorest conceits of a poet meet with high admiration. The habits and tastes of the Basrians had, therefore, doubtless a great share in directing the genius of their townsmen.<sup>150</sup>

In this assembly Hariri intends to satirise what he pleads to imitate. Harith being known for the society of literary persons, goes to Holwan, a town in Iraq, enjoys the literary guidance of Abu Zayd in the public library where persons fond of superficial studies were discussing the merits of celebrated poets. At last they offer him rewards and Abu Zayd discourses the meeting after reciting some verses about the cruelty of time and his own misfortune. Harith as usual, recognises Abu Zayd in Basra

Abu Zayd has referred in this Maqama to the famous tribe of Qasran from which he claims his lineage. The rulers

---

of Ghassan reigned in Syria under the supervision of Romans. Their enmity with the kings of Hira, who ruled under the protection of the Persians, is one of the noteworthy features of ancient Arab history. Again, Abu Sayd claims to belong to the Sasanid stock and sometimes he gives various accounts of himself fitting to various disguises in which he has appeared. The activities of Sasanids, their mendicancy and making livelihood by various means, were widely known in the Abbasid ages. Hariri through the hero of his Maqamat named Abu Sayd, has produced their clever and vile means of living. This is why he has claimed to belong to Sasanids.<sup>151</sup> According to al-Sherishi, there was a Persian king who had also ruled on the Arabs. When the Prophet of Islam sent him a message to embrace Islam, he declined to accept the same and finally God's rage fell upon him. In the caliphate of 'Umar, the battle of Qadisiya took place, and their glorious kingdom was absolutely ruined. During the time of the 3rd caliph 'Uthman, the Persians were completely subdued by the Moslem conquerors. Then they (Persians) adopted their (Moslems) religion and other ways of life. But as they (Persians) were clever, brave, artful and cunning persons, they had chosen various ways of earning their livelihood. One of those ways was mendicancy and thus they were called mendicants. They used to roam from place to place exciting pity and gaining sympathy of people, calling themselves Sasanids or belonging to royal house of Sasan and related their misfortunes, sorrows and hardships of life. So they deceived people won their favour and earned all their livelihood. Their mendicancy & deception became so popular

---

151. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat cc 16, 23 to 27

whenever a beggar was seen, they called him with the title of Sāsani.<sup>151</sup> In the opinion of Thomas Chenery 'this may be the true derivation of the word, but it is evident from the 49th Assembly that Hariri adopts the legend which makes Sasan a real person.<sup>152</sup>

As related by al-Sherishi, it is said that Sasan was a real person who found medicine and it is referred to him, just as 'Jafayl' refers to the class of 'Jafayly'. The legendary Sasan and other references about him, are already discussed in the Assemblies of al-Hamadhani.

Hariri refers to Iraq in this maqama. Iraq at that time was a place of various intrigues and maladministration. If the rich were rolling in wealth and luxury, the poor were suffering from hunger and beggary. The Governors and Emirs were selfish and were collecting money without any consideration of the poor. There were many other differences such as, disputes between sunnis and shiites, division among army, bad policies, attachment of poor's property etc.<sup>153</sup> The compiler of Duhal Islam states, that Iraq was one of the shining and prosperous places where land tax was received from far off places. Owing to this, all commodities were becoming costly. The rich were growing richer, while the poor were becoming poorer. Abul Atahia in his verses has complained against darkness and growing poverty existing in his time. The literateurs of his period had attached themselves with some court of Governor or Emir and those who were aloof they were facing worries of life. Thus Iraq, in this respect, had also been a well known residence

---

152. Shamsiyyat al-Ashtab pp 286 to 288

153. Ghazali al-Adab p. 27

of litterateurs where they had taken shelter in order to make their living by pleasing the Sovereign with their fine literary output.

Hariri presents his narrator Harith b. Hammam in this Maqama who leaves Iraq for Basra due to poverty. Thus he praises his own motherland and always suggests that the place is Basra. As the above narrator comes to the public library of Basra he sees an old man of thick beard, dressed poorly, who afterwards appears as Abu Zayd, and recites his excellent poetry. At this stage, Hariri has given a personal reference of his own beard. Abu Zayd as produced in these Maqama, had a thick beard, similar to that of the author himself. Ibn Jahoor has remarked that Hariri had a little thick beard, which was not self-grown. He always pulled its hairs, and put his hand on it, because of its being thick. Here the resemblance of the beard of Abu Zayd and the reputed author of the Assemblies are made equal to each other. It gives an idea that the hero of the Assemblies is representing Hariri himself.

Again, the second assembly is one of those assemblies in which Hariri has produced Abu Zayd as a preacher and a good poet. His eloquent speech as well as his marvellous verses declare him as an eminent poet and litterateur of his time. Hariri in this way has mainly displayed his poetic genius which has made him unrivalled in poetic pursuits.<sup>155,156</sup>

In al-Deenaria, when Harith is seen in the company of scholars, a lame man appears and relates his penury in a poetic

---

154. Ahmed Amin Mubal Islam pp 133,136,139,141 vol 1

155. Al-Sherishi Sharah maqamat p. 27

156. Zayf Al-Maqama p. 57

way, Harith offers him a dinar for its praise and again gives another dinar to him if he condemns the same. The said lame man, who later turns to be Abu Zayd shows his outstanding merits in praising and accusing the said dinar and ultimately in his closing verses, Abu Zayd defends himself saying that all his tricks are only for the sake of making a living. This assembly clearly shows his abilities in the field of poetic literature. It also throws some light in the character of Abu Zayd who by such false means had earned his livelihood. It is indeed, a novel feature of the Sasanids who used to make their living by various ways in the age of al-Hamadhani and Hariri. Here the poems applied by Abu Zayd are of a literary nature.<sup>157, 158</sup>

Al-Dimyatia, refers to Dimyat, a town. The distance between Egypt and Dimyat is about thirty farsakhs.

In this assembly it is related that Harith has left for Dimyat, has stayed somewhere in the night and there he has heard two men discussing over one's duty towards his neighbour. While one pleads generosity and charity, the other abuses him. Next morning Harith finds Abu Zayd and his son there, who had a good deal of conversation in the last night. In the end both of them, the hero and his son go away with gifts and rewards and leave some lines written on the saddle for Harith. Abu Zayd alludes a precept in the Koran which means departure after words.<sup>157, 158</sup>

In this assembly, Hariri has shown his rhetorical dictation through the hero of his Maqamat, Abu Zayd. The latter has again appeared representing the mendicant class of Sasanids and has thus obtained rewards through his fraudulent means.

157. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p. 27, 40, 43

158. Chenery Assemblies pp 117, 121



Al-Kufia is named after Kufa, a well known seat for Arabic learning. In this Maqama, Harith stays in a night at Kufa. Abu Zayd relates his misfortunes and troubles and obtains money from scholars. Later on, Harith comes to know that the story is totally false and it is only a trick to get alms. Neither Abu Zayd had wife nor son. From this Maqama the trick of Abu Zayd for making money by false means is also evident. It only refers to various artifices of the people of Saman in which Abu Zayd claims his lineage.<sup>159, 160</sup>

Al-Miraghia is called after Miraghah, a place in Azerbaidjan in the northwest province of the present Persian monarchy. Harith in the company of literary figures at Miraghah is lamenting on the decline of knowledge and learning. Abu Zayd appears there as one of the prominent men of letters, presents his unique address and surprises them by his excellent speech. In his verses Abu Zayd declares that he belongs to the tribe of Thaqan and is born in the city of Saruj and further, he relates his hardships and miseries. For showing his merits he tells them that he is offered the rank of public writer, but has refused to join it as he deems that a life of freedom and penury is better than awaiting the alms of the rich. One of the most remarkable features of this assembly is that the address delivered by Abu Zayd is a matchless literary jewel in which some letters are pointed while others are unpointed. Hariri has shown his superiority in the art of composition of this Maqamat. It is one of the famous literary Assemblies which produces Hariri's charming and commanding style of composition.<sup>159 to 161</sup>

---

159. Al-Cherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 57, 67

160. Ghunery Assemblies pp 126, 132

161. Rayf al-Maqamat p. 159

Al-Sherishi has stated that the time when Hariri lived was full of various vices and evils, worries and pains. He has further cited verses of the contemporary poets of Hariri in order to prove the tyranny of time and worse condition of the life of noblemen during his age, when only mean persons were enjoying their lives with comfort and ease.<sup>162</sup>

Ibn Linkar, one of the Dairan poets, has rebuked his time which has made noble and good persons facing numerous trials and hardships. There are several other poets such as Abu Dulaf, Abu Ahmed al-'ukbari, Ibn al-Bajja, Ibn Sakaara and Ibn Hubata, who have recited verses accusing their time and condemning the affairs prevailing during the Abbasid reign. This assembly is also named as 'Diversified' by Chenery, because its construction owns different forms or qualities, in which some letters are pointed while others are unpointed.<sup>163, 164</sup>

Al-Barka'idia is named after Barka'id, the chief town of Diyar Rabi'ah, at a distance of twenty farsakh from Hama. Harith goes to public prayer on the day of Id. There he sees an old man with closed eyes along with an old woman. The latter, then distributes leaflets in which poverty, miseries and the account of the old man who has a number of dependants are also related. Harith is amazed with remarkable accounts of the said pamphlets as well as with their wonderful style of composition. In order to know about their author's name, he gives a dirham to the old woman and learns that it is Abu Sayd who has cited them. Later on,

---

162. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 80, 82

163. Chenery Assemblies pp 67 etc.

164. Gharni Al-Adab pp 239, 244, 247

Harith invites him to his residence and offers him (the old man) a garment. As soon as Abu Tayd finds privacy, he opens his eyes and his cheating is discovered by Harith. At last Abu Tayd sends the narrator Harith for bringing 'alkali' to wash his hands and a tooth stick, but before he returns Abu Tayd floods with the old woman, the whole story presents the doubtful game of the hero of Magarat, which he has always chosen to earn his living. Even in this Magarat, Abu Tayd gives reason of his false blindness and says that since he has become blind and has lost the path of virtue and honesty, hence he is taking advantage of his blindness.<sup>165</sup>

Hariri in this assembly has also named an important poet of Basra, who was appointed by Umar b. Abdul Aziz through the Governor of Basra named Adib Artat. The name of the sage-like poet was Ibn Iyas who died in the year 200 A.H. by describing the learned poet, Hariri has on the one hand referred his rather term Basra, while on the other hand he has equaled the genius of his narrator Harith to the said poet.<sup>166</sup>

Al-Murri refers to al-Basrah, a town in Syria, Hu'man is a mountain on which this town is situated. It was a fertile place at the time when Hariri lived. The story described in this assembly is a simple one. An illiterate, an old man and a handsome young go to the land of Hu'man. In figurative diction the old man carried his cordle with a fine slave girl which the pouch has broken. The latter admits the said charge and tells him that he has already paid him fairly. The poet at last has commented them but has felt some suspicion. we then send an attendant to discover  
165. Chenery Assemblies p. 169

the truth the deceit is conferred by the old man Lincolf, who  
 and then grants them pardon and discharges with a warning. In  
 this Assembly, again Abu Jayd has complained against tyranny of  
 time, poverty and need, before the Earl of Maccra, he has also  
 stated him that his conscience and deceit are only for the sake  
 of livelihood, so those who are clever and deceitful such as  
 magicians, they make their living by various artifices. <sup>166, 167</sup>

Al-Alexandria or Alexandria is named after a famous city  
 of Egypt which is founded by Alexander, the Great. Harith has  
 passed through Marghara, a place in the suburb of Ahuracan,  
 and Heghara, a town of Sudan and has reached Alexandria. Heghara  
 was a well known place for slaves in the days of Hariri. People  
 used to buy them for presentation to amirs and governors. Hariri  
 by his reference to this place, states that prostitution in slaves  
 was widely spread in those days. The history of Islam clearly  
 proves that trade in slaves was everywhere found since early times.  
 After the birth of Islam, slaves were gradually freed but during  
 the Abbasids, it again achieved progress, because the rulers of  
 the Abbasid period were fond of glory and splendour, hence people  
 pleased them by various means e.g. by presenting slaves to the  
 rulers. <sup>168, 169</sup>

In this Assembly, when Harith b. Hammam attends the  
 court of a Emir of Alexandria, he sees an old man surrounded by

a beautiful young woman. At this time the said Emir distributed

166. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p 99

167. Chenery Assemblies p 115

168. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p 99

169. Chenery Assemblies pp 36 to 3, 101

aims to needy and beggars, the woman accuses her husband of marrying her with fraud, on this the old man, relates his journey in elegant verses and declines to admit fraud or cheating with his wife. He tells that he has meant by 'Pearl Stringer' the pearls of imagination and fancy, by which he has always earned a lot of money from wealthy persons. The old man who later turns to be Abu Zayd, laments time which is totally changed. Wars and troubles have surrounded the state and a race of rascals and uncultured persons has taken the place of generous persons of literature.<sup>169</sup> According to Gheneri, 'his race had been in Iraq and in Syria been subjected to foreign domination and the power of Turks had been extended.' He further remarks, 'he was already of middle age when the crusaders marched through Asia minor into Syria. Baara had suffered like the whole East from the convulsions of the Moslem world, but it was at least spared an incursion of the Christian Franks.' According to an Eastern chronicler as he states, 'the following event took place in the year 490 A.H. = 1101 A.D. A Turkish chieftain named Solman collected in the neighbouring city of Seruj, a body of Turkomans and prepared to march against the Franks. The latter advanced to meet them and the army of Solman was put to flight. The Franks advanced towards Seruj, laid siege to it, took it and put to the sword the men capable of bearing arms. The women were made slaves, the place was plundered and only the inhabitants escaped who sought safety in flight.'<sup>169</sup>

The aforesaid account clearly reveals the situation prevailing in Baara and other Islamic countries at the time when Hariri has composed his Maqamat. Among his hero, Abu Zayd,

---

Hariri has pointed out hard time which has neglected the son of letters during a period of war and confusion.

The old man Abu Sayd tells the aforementioned qazi that he is an inhabitant of Feruj and belongs to the family of Qasim. He is also a poet and the days are so hard for him that he has become poor and needy. The qazi affected with his fluent speech and fine verses give him alms. Later on, it is discovered that Abu Sayd has cheated him for receiving gifts from him. The qazi treats it as a jest and takes no care of it.<sup>169</sup>

In this assembly, the caps worn by qazis in those days, known as 'Damiya' are mentioned. Al-Sherishi states that such caps were also used in Iraq. Ibn Jinkak, one of the reputed poets of Basra, has noted in his verses that the caps put on by Qazis in those days were called as 'Damiya'. This word is generally spoken in Iraq and was used by the poets. Hariri referring to Damiya, has depicted the picture of a qazi of his age, which is similar to the qazis of other places.<sup>170, 171</sup>

Al-Mahbia is called after a famous town, Rahbah, situated on the Euphrates. It was founded by Malik Ibn Jank the warling of this Island. It is also known by the name of Rahbah-al-Jaham (i.e., Rahbah of Syria). In this region Abu Zayd receives Rahbah while making money. Harith sees a crowd, where an old man is dragging a handsome youth. Shortly, both of them go to the Governor of the island to seek justice. The old man charges the youth with the murder of his son, and the youth pleads not guilty. The aforementioned Governor was known for his vices and immorality. He always pre-

ferred 'Chilman' to women. Hariri in this assembly produced

170. Ghazali Al-Madab p 214

171. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat no 108, 111

immorality and unnatural lust of Amir, Wazirs and Governors of his time. Al-Sherishi has also named several Amir and Wazirs who possessed such shameful habits and vices. For instance, the Wazir Yahya b. Akram was reputed for his love with the Ghilman. It is also said that Wazirs had criticised him because the aforesaid Wazir had collected the verse of their sons. He also used to recite verses in praise of Ghilman. At last, he was dismissed from the high rank of Wazir. There are a number of satirical verses about him. The name of another Wazir who was also known for immorality is Abul Wazir 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Janukhi. He was very fond of Ghilman and a handsome youth had always accompanied him. Among the Amir, the names of Abul As'ad al-Hamadani and Yamin Ibn al-Ma'az, the Governor of Egypt are well known. About the former's bad character, al-Juzjani has composed verses. Thus, there were, indeed a number of persons who had been practising Ghilman during the Abbasid reign.

Mahmud Ghazali states in his book 'al-Adab al-Zilli Bani Bawayh' that amongst the interested persons in Ghilman were al-Sahab b. Abbas, al-Gabi, al-Wazir al-Muhallabi, al-Wazir al-Janukhi, Ibn Khallad, al-Kuffe al-Basri and several other Wazirs, jurists and traditionists. Poets such as al-Galimi and Nasir b. Ahmad al-Khadrari have cited verses in praise of Ghilman. Abu Nuwas is one of the celebrated poets on this particular subject. Such a literature is known as 'of debauchery and corruptions.' Ibn Hajar and Ibn Sukarra among the poets, while litterateurs e.g.

172. Ghazali's assemblies p 15

173. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 114, 115

174. Ahmad Amin Zuhar al-Islam pp 97, 136 col. i

al-Sahab, al-Sabi, al-Khwarizmi, al-Jamdhani, Ahmad al-Makbari and Abu Dulaf have depicted many vices of the Abbasid reign.<sup>175</sup>

According to Hitti we read of Ghilmen in the reign of al-Rashid, but it was evidently the caliph al-Amin who, following Persian precedent, established in the Arabic world the Ghilmen institution for the practice of unnatural sexual relations. A judge of whom there is record used four hundred such youths. Poets did not disdain to give public expression to their perverted passions and to address amorous pieces of their composition to beardless young boys.<sup>176</sup>

Hariri, in this assembly, reveals one of the most shameful habits of his age through the character of a Governor who was fond of having a handsome youth in order to satisfy his unnatural lust. For this purpose he gives dinners to Abu Zayd and <sup>promises</sup> to give again some dinners the next day. Abu Zayd, who is well aware of his (Governor's) habits guards the boy in the night and leaves the place after writing satirical verses for the said Governor. On recognition of Harith, he (Abu Zayd) says that the boy is his son who is learning his vocation and if he had not cheated the Governor, he would not have obtained dinners from him.

The oath which Abu Zayd suggests to be taken by the youth is of a unique type. Abu Zayd in it, has trained beauty and its attraction for the eyes, cheek, tooth, nose and fingers are noted. He pleads that if the deponent ever lies, his

---

<sup>175</sup>. Ghonawi al-Adab pp 51, 252, 266, 269, 281  
<sup>176</sup>. Hitti The Arabs p 99



beauty will be ruined. Youth refuses to take such an oath. Hence the Governor became more attracted towards him due to the charm created by Abu Zayd.<sup>177</sup>

Hariri also gives a personal reference of his own faith in this assembly. It must be remembered that he belongs to Shafi doctrines, hence he points out a celebrated doctor of the Shafi's school named Ibn Surayj, who died in the year 306 A.H. about one and half century before Hariri. Chenery states that 'Ibn Surayj was a great doctor of the rite of Shafi's and Kadi of Shiraj, in Persia. His full name was Abul 'Abbas Ahmed b. Ibn 'Omar b. Surayj for his zeal and learning he was surnamed 'the bright fire'. He died in 306 A.H.<sup>178</sup>

Al-Sawish is named after a town Sawah which is situated between Hamadhan and Rayy. It is also one of those assemblies in which a single sermon is recorded by Hariri through his hero, Abu Zayd. Harith goes to the burial ground of Sawah for contemplation and sees an old man delivering a speech on uncertainty of life and surety of death; wealth and luxury; selfishness and pride and such other subjects. In the words of Chenery 'this magnificent hymn is unsurpassed, what is noblest and best in Telap.<sup>179</sup>

Thus the old man who appears to be Abu Zayd collects abundant gifts. Harith when recognises him, charges Abu Zayd with deceit and fraud but the latter replies that time has become vicious and hard and none can be successful without hypocrisy and mendicancy.

This assembly produces one of the most glorious sermons and also mendicancy played by Abu Zayd in order to earn his living which is visible in all assemblies.<sup>179-180</sup>

---

177. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p. 116

178. Chenery Assemblies pp 163, 55

179. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 120, 129, 134

180. Zayf al-Maqamat p. 57, 58

Al-Damishqi is named after Damascus. It is situated on the fertile plains of Chutah. A commentator says 'the Chutah of Damascus is reckoned among the gardens or paradises of the earth.' According to al-Azma'i, the beautiful places of the earth are three: Damascus, Samarra and Basra. Al-Sherishi has compared Damascus with Iram that al-'Izadi, for its glory and splendour. Hariri by mentioning Chutah, has presented its all beauties and attractions for the description of Damascus. 180-182

It is one of the significant assemblies in which Abu Hayyā excited a caravan for doing good and noble deeds. Its style is, no doubt, of an effective hymn and prayer, the exact sentences and diction attract those who read it. Hariri in this poem, refers to the people of his age, who pray God for safety of their lives, freedom from cruelty of Governors and from various artifices and destruction of the empire and country. They also pray for the help of God against the oppressors.

The story begins with the departure of Harith from Iraq and Damascus to enjoy the luxury of the city. He requires an escort for his protection from robbers, who were commonly found almost at all places of the empire. Hariri with his reference to robbers, relates one of the noteworthy features of his time. It is described earlier in Maqamat al-Hamadhani, that there were certain classes of robbers who were called with the names of 'Shatir', 'Sa'look', 'Ayyar', 'Saasid' etc. They used to plunder in different parts of the country, commit murder, abduct women, seize properties and molest common masses. No ruler could ever check their unlawful activities and thus their strength grew stronger day by day. 182-184

181. Al-Sherishi 'Harah Maqamat' p. 113

182. Ghazali Assemblies no 160, 352, 5.

183. Ahmed Amin Duhal Islam p 136 vol. I

184. Ahmed Amin Duhal Islam p 52 vol. 2.

Shortly Harith comes across with a saint, who is dressed like a bishop and assures him of safe travelling through his magical words which are revealed to him in a dream. The account of the gate of 'Jeeroon' recalls one of the famous gates of the mosque of Damascus. At this place Abu 'ayd's speech displays his outstanding skill and religious views. It is, indeed, one of the supreme lectures which Hariri has composed and has caused it to be delivered by his hero of the assemblies. Later on Abu 'ayd is seen by Harith at Aush, a city well known for its liquor. The taverns of Aush, were always consisted of a number of amirs, Cadi and other distinguished persons. It is again, one of the most important characteristics of the people of his time because drinking was popular in almost all the courts of the Governors and Amirs that to say of the common masses, who were addicted to drinking, listening to maidens' songs and other recreations prevalent at that time. Al-Sherishi has specifically recorded the statement of a learned Cadi named al-Tanukhi. He states that all Cadi used to assemble in the court of the vizier al-Jahhalabi twice a week. They used to pass two nights in revelry and other entertainments. Among such entertainments persons who joined this assembly were al-Cadi-al-Andarji, Ibn Ma'roof, Ibn Farooq and others. These Cadi used to dance in intoxication while wine was being served to them by handsome and charming children. Many poets have cited verses about their merry making, drinking dancing and doing immoral acts. As the morning sun peered from the east, these pious and religious persons, who had passed their nights in revelry

185. Al-Rafa'ie Tarikh 'adab n. 96

and wine and music, used to wear holy robes of their rank, put on 'banin' on their <sup>186</sup>heads and then performed their duties as religious pioneers of their time.

In this assembly, Hariri has related advantages and disadvantages of drinking, and handsome children offering wine and participating in music, which was inevitable on such occasions. Among the drunkards, Abu-al-Saib, a jurist, Yahya b. Adam a Qari and Abdullah b. Tahir, a Governor and some other kings and Amirs are well known. Ibn Sukarra a poet, has satirised Abu-al-Saib and has shown his immorality. Ibn Linkak a noted poet of Basra has also disclosed injustice of the kings and Amirs. Besides, there <sup>186, 187</sup>are numerous examples of their revelries and recreations.

The author of the Arabs' states that 'alcoholic drinks were often indulged both in company and in private... Even Caliphs and viziers, princes and judges paid no heed to the religious injunction. Khar, made of dates, was the favourite beverage.' He further remarks that 'convivial parties featuring the drinking of the wine and song were not uncommon. At these drinking bouts the host and the guests perfumed their boards with civet and rose water and wore <sup>188</sup>exotic garments of bright colours. The room was made fragrant by ambergris or aloes wood burning in a censer. The songstresses who participated in such gatherings were mostly slaves of loose character, as illustrated by many a story; they constituted the greatest menace to the morals of the youth of the age.'

This Maqama produces as cited above, one of the popular habits of his age, which was usually existing in the people at

186. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 150, 153

187. Qanawi Al-Adab pp 137, 252, 281

188. Hitti the Arabs pp 96, 97

the time when the author of Maqamat lived. Harith finding Abu Zayd at the wine shop along with other pious and religious persons is shocked, hence he accuses Abu Zayd for his wickedness by recalling his speech at the mosque of 'Jocron'. At this, Abu Zayd recites his finest verses and relates his journey and crime. He also reveals his malicious aims for making his living. Harith leaves the tavern with sorrow and swears not to visit such places in future.<sup>182</sup> Thus the Maqama closes while giving us a complete picture of the Abbasid reign.

Al-Baghdadi is named after Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasids. According to al-Sherishi, al-Hamzan called it 'the city of peace (i.e. Madcen at-al-Salam) of the city of al-Hamzan'<sup>189</sup> (i.e. Madcen-at-al-Hamzan). Many writers have praised the glory and magnificence of Baghdad which was the centre of all outstanding literary personages. According to Ahmad Amin<sup>190</sup> all litterateurs of the time were surrounded and at one college or amira in Baghdad in the 4th century of al-Hijra. He has again presented the picture of their meetings in the courts of Egypt.<sup>191</sup> The writer of al-Adab-fi-Zilli-Dani-Dawayh has stated that the chief residence of the poets and litterateurs was Baghdad. There are several other writers who have written ample praise of Baghdad.<sup>192</sup>

Harith b. Hammam visiting such a seat of learning and knowledge is seen in the company of celebrated poets, when all of a sudden an old woman appears along with her children, partici-

partes in literary discussion, displays her extraordinary skill

189. Al-Sherishi *Umrat Maqamat* p. 105

190. *Chenariy Assemblies* pp. 176, 191

191. Ahmad Amin *Zuhar al-Islam* pp. 1 to 9 vol. 2

192. *Ghannawi al-Adab* o. 120.

in excellent prose and poetry and by her interesting production amazed the audience. In relating all this, she shows herself as a poor widow and her children as orphans. She complains against the tyranny of time and miseries which has made her helpless and needy. Through this mendicacy, she obtains charity from the people and goes ahead. Soon after Harith discovers that she is not a woman but Abu Zayd, the impostor, who is making his living through fraud and cheating.<sup>189,190</sup>

According to the compiler of Al-Maqamat, al-Bughdadi produces an amusing spirit. The description of Abu Zayd, of an old woman in disguise, along with her lost and feeble children weeping and sighing for her lost husband and good old days and further lamenting on her former prosperity and present distress, is undoubtedly one of the most entertaining features of the assembly of Hariri.<sup>193</sup>

His assembly al-Macca is called after Mecca, the holy seat of Islam. In it no fraud or deceit is related except the presence of Abu Zayd at Mecca. The story begins with the departure of Harith for Mecca, in summer season. While Harith is sitting in a tent in the company of his friends, an old man and his son appear soliciting relief. Both of them recite verses one after the other and surprise Harith and his companions with their extraordinary skill in poetry. Thus they receive gifts. Harith asks the old man about him, on which the latter replied that he belongs to Feruj, which is ruined and destroyed by invaders.<sup>194</sup> Chénery states that the Frank advanced against Feruj,

laid siege to it took it and put to the sword all its people

193. Kayf Al-Maqama p 71

194. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p 172

Hadi-al-Haman longer, both would have been better. 'Abu Muhammad' <sup>199</sup> he says 'is so long as to weary the hearer'. The opinions of these learned figures while seeing the length of this assembly, seem to be correct, which no doubt makes the reader much tired.

Al-Maghribia is one of the literary assemblies of Hariri. Abu Tayd's excellent verses which may be read preserving their identity even when they are reversed, are the finest piece of poetic fiction which Hariri has ever produced. These literary inventions certainly declare Hariri's superiority to his contemporaries and other literary figures. This assembly exhibits Hariri's remarkable scholarship and wide experience of skill and wisdom through the hero of his Maqamat. This is the main object of it. The story begins when Harith and some other scholars after performing the sunset prayer (i.e. the prayer of Maghrib) in a mosque, join a literary discussion. At the same time a skilled orator appears on the stage and addresses nervously. Then Harith demands Abu Tayd for some unique literary output, the said orator presents his significant verses and surprises them with his command in composing a new kind of poetry. In the end Abu Tayd pleads that his children are hungry. He receives gifts and charities from the audience and assures them to return soon. In the morning, they come to know that he is Abu Tayd who has <sup>198-201</sup> cheated them.

Hariri in this assembly mentions one of the peculiar classes of people who are called 'Tufayli' with his reference to Harith b. Hammam who attends a literary discussion like a

199. Chenery Assemblies pp 185, 194

200. Tayf al-Maqama pp 59, 60, 66

201. Umar Farrukh al-Hassa'il pp 56, 57

of bearing arms. The women were made slaves, the place was plundered, and only those inhabitants escaped who sought safety in flight.<sup>195</sup> According to an Eastern chronicler the following event took place in the year 490 A.H. - 1101 A.D.

Hariri refers this event through the account of Abu Zayd who has related about Saraj, his home town and its destruction. This suggestion follows from the fact that he has commenced to compile his Maqamat in the year 495 A.H. which means only five years hence and has completed his masterpieces work in 504 A.H. The compiler of al-Maqamat states that Hariri had spent nine years in compilation of his glorious work (the assemblage) on which his fame solely depends and which could not be so far challenged even by the most distinguished men of letters.<sup>196,197</sup>

Al-Farisi is called after a very simple legal puzzle. Hariri has based this Maqama on jurisprudence in which he has stated one of the problems of inheritance and has fixed upon one of the heirs, mentioned in it. In Hariri's romance al-Farisi on a dark night, waiting for a story teller, Abu Zayd appears there and describes his adventure. He also takes his supper, relates the problem with its solution in the most elegant prose and poetry, amuses Harith with his wonderful learning and style of composition and lastly departs in the morning.<sup>198</sup>

According to Thomas Cheney 'Morishi, in his introductory remarks with justice on the 'inordinate length of this assembly, and gives one by al-Nawadhani, of only a few lines, as a contrast to it, observing that if Hariri had been shorter and

---

195. Cheney Assemblies p 184

196. Kayf al-Maqama pp 46,71

197. Umar Farrah al-Rasa'il p 54

198. Al-Sherishi Sharah maqamat pp 176,187 to 190



member of tufayli group. the literal meaning of the word 'Tufayli' is that one who joins a feast without an invitation is called 'Mutataffil', hence one who belongs to this class is called Tufayli. This is the quality of mean and wicked persons.<sup>198</sup>

Al-Sherishi in his commentary, has cited a number of people who are called Tufayli and belong to the native town of Hariri i.e. Basra. Thus there seems no doubt that Hariri always presents the picture of the society of his motherland. This is also the opinion of Thomas Chenery who states that 'the assemblies of Hariri are, themselves, the best picture of the society of the city. Wherever he may place the scene of the adventure, it is always Basra that he has in his mind and the dilattani of Basra whose taste he shares or reproves.<sup>202</sup>

Bachakar-al-Tufayli has said, as al-Sherishi remarks, that the members of his class have their own organisation, who join banquets, wedding feasts, rides etc and after collecting gifts they distribute it among them. He further states that once he has also been beaten for this, because he belongs to Baghdad and does not know about distribution of booty. There are other stories of Tufaylis of Basra such as of Ibn Durratj and others. Now on, the glorious emperor of Abbasids has also enjoyed their fune in his extended court. It is said that tufaylis attend parties with some pretence eg. showing interest in the game of chess or playing upon some musical instrument etc. One of the most amusing stories of Tufaylis is that once a person said to a Tufayli to cook meat for him. The latter has done nothing except joining the feast saying lest his friend might be angry with him. the most celebrated  
202, Chenery Assemblies on 187 to 190

writer of al-Kamil, namely al-Nabati had reported about a Tufayli of Basra, who was a learned man and had a pleasing nature. The aforesaid Tufayli had gone to a wedding feast without invitation and on enquiring about, he proceeded to say that his host might be sad for his not joining the banquet. One of the noted Tufayli of Basra is Abu-Saleh. Whenever he receives information of a banquet he proceeds there in the company of his son having put on sometime the garment of Qazis and sometime other robes. Thus by some pretence, they attend the feasts. The death of the said Tufayli has also resulted due to taking part in a dinner. As al-Sherishi has related, there are numerous accounts of Tufaylis, who are found everywhere in the Islamic empire during the days of Hariri. Thus a reference to this class reveals a characteristic of a well known group, who make their living by various means without shame of beggary, mendicancy or soliciting alms. 191-202

Al-Fahqaria means 'the reversed' as named by Ghonory. This assembly already resembles the last one i.e. al-Fahqaria in its unique construction and wonderful diction. According to Ghonory 'its peculiarity lies in words which themselves being reversed produce a perfect sense'. 204 The compiler of al-Maqamat has stated 205 that it is one of the artistic assemblages of Hariri. Hariri in it has compiled an epistle whose words can be read forwards and backwards together. So it is of twice form and diction and is based on two patterns. One can easily read it as are books and epistles <sup>etc</sup> read from right to left and again it can be read vice versa i.e. from left to right. It is further related that assembly

---

204. Ghonory Assemblies p 200

205. Zayf al-Maqama pp 60, 61

contains a collection of maxims, which consists of hundred words on this particular pattern. The difference between this assembly and the last one is, that in the former, words can be read either from forward to backward or vice versa, while in the latter assembly, letters are used from backward to contrast to the letters used forwardly.<sup>206</sup>

The story related in this *maqama* bears little importance. The only significance of it, lies in its artistic composition of a new kind of writing. Abu *Hayd*'s complaint is against hardenings and cruelties of time and its people, hence his wandering from place to place and soliciting alms are usual themes which are found almost in all assemblies.<sup>203-206</sup>

*Al-Sinjaria* is called after *Sinjar*, a city of *Uyayr* *Arabia* between *Uyayr* and *Iraq*. *Chenery* has remarked that 'the assembly is one of the most poetical in *Hariri*'s work.... Moreover merits it may possess, are however, diminished by the circumstance that it is a close imitation and in parts almost a literal copy of one by *al-Hamadhani*.' According to the famous commentator of *Hariri*, named *al-Sherishi*, this assembly is composed by *Hariri* in comparison to *al-Hamadhani*. The latter's assembly is called *al-madkuria*, which in his opinion is lengthy and blessing.<sup>207</sup>

The story described in this *maqama*, begins with the departure of *Harith* and *Abu Hayd* along with others from *Uyayr* to *Baghdad*. While they halt at *Sinjar*, they are invited to attend a wedding feast in which all classes of people are called. Just as he (*Abu Hayd*) sees a vase of sweet meats he leaves his seat like a mad man saying that he had taken an oath not to go near

---

203. *Al-Sherishi Sharah maqamat* p. 197  
206. *Uyar Farrukh Al-Rasa'il* p. 58

transparent things. Later on he related the story of a beautiful girl, who is required by the Governor for his prince, who Governor has taken by force the girl. Abu Sayd further tells her unfaithfulness and vows for not remaining in a company which will disclose a secret. He again tells about the silver vases in which the sweetmeats are kept. In his opinion, a glass has also this defect which in reality is quite different from that it appears outwardly. Hence he refuses to take sweetmeats and sit before it. In the end, he gives his good counsel in a very enduring manner and dissolves the meeting. <sup>207, 208</sup>

Al-Nasibia is called after 'Nasibiya' a city of Diyar Rabiah, situated on the mountain of Joudhi, where the son of Noah had stayed. This assembly shows Hariri's knowledge of Tufayli terms which he has used in the end of it. According to Chenery 'among the fancies of his age there was a custom to give food names of various kinds connected with 'Abu' and 'Um.. As the Arabs called a bird Abu Drajash etc etc, so the Sufiists of the polished cities of Iraq called a dish of rice by one bye-name. <sup>209</sup>

<sup>210</sup> Al-Sherishi has stated that this assembly consists of a large number of typical words belonging to lexicon. There are certain other words entitled as Tufayli terms or the Jargon used by sufis (mystics) eg. Abu Yahya stands for death, 'Umra for hunger, Abu'Aun for salt etc. According to compiler of al-Maqamat, this assembly is also based on literary pattern

207. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p 204

208. Chenery Assemblies pp 214, 215

209. Chenery Assemblies p 206

210. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 21, 207

showing its regularity just as other assemblies display their individuality with their particular significance. This clearly shows that the object of Maqamat is diction, and artistic style much less their themes. Hariri has produced his share wit in creating a keenness in lexicon and revealing the secrets of philology. The story related in it, is of usual simplicity. Abu Zayd is shown passing his life at Basibin, where he falls seriously ill. Harith also goes to see him and Abu Zayd recites some verses concerning his troubles, pains and uncertainty of life. Later, Abu Zayd asks his son in a Tufayli term for meals. In the end they depart happily saying that there are ease and comfort after worries. The importance of this assembly lies in disclosing a custom of his age by mentioning 'Tufayli Jargons' which were commonly practised by literary persons in the days of Hariri.  
210, 211

Al-Farisiyya is called after 'Mayyafarikin' a town from where 'Basibin' is at a distance of thirty farsakhs. Mayyafarikin belongs to Diyar Bakr. Al-Nutanabhi has mentioned in his verse that Sayf-al-Daula had captured it. The story described in it is of no significance. Harith intends to visit Mayyafarikin in the company of his friends. There he sees a crowd in which Abu Zayd is speaking fluently and reciting verses, lamenting his poor health and old age. He is appealing to the people to provide a shroud for his intimate friend who is mighty and brave, and has just expired. The people do not pay any heed to his request till Harith gives his ring to him and then Abu Zayd receives enough bounty from them. In the last, Harith discovers

that it is a deceit through which Abu Tayd had collected gifts and rewards.<sup>212, 213</sup>

This assembly presents one of the deceitful means of making livelihood which was current during the lifetime of Hariri.

Al-Razia is named after Rayy in Persia. It is situated on the way of Khurasan and is well known as one of the chief centres of letters, where extraordinary talents are assembled from all quarters of the Islamic empire. The story is of the same simplicity as related in other assemblies. It is of those five assemblies in which Hariri has depicted one of the remarkable sermons delivered by Abu Tayd. Harith arrives in Rayy looks people gathered round a preacher, who is of great voice and outstanding abilities. The distinguished preacher, Abu Tayd appears as an old man in costume. Abu Tayd stands amidst the people wearing a cap called 'alansam' and putting 'taylan' the green blanket used by the Amir, on his shoulders. Hariri in the lines has truly presented a picture of Abu Tayd who appears as a wali or amir. The wonderful poetry recited by him shows Hariri's command in the field of poetic dictation. These verses mentioned life, death, wealth and poverty; pride and humility with their due influence on the audience. Meanwhile, a petitioner informs him about a Governor of a certain place, who does not listen to his complaint against an official, hence he requests to help him with his admonitions. Abu Tayd then, begins to accuse the said Governor for injustice. The latter takes immediate notice of it, repents, hastens to do justice and rewards the preacher.

---

212. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 250, 213, 214  
213. Chenery Assemblies pp 220, 223.

harith has doubted that the said speaker is Umar b. al-Aqayd, who is a renowned scholar of Basra. And then he learned that he is Abu Rayh, Hariri always refers to Basra and its personages, here a religious man of Basra Umar b. al-Aqayd is related whose preachings are well known and his good counsels to the Caliph Al-Mansur have made him full of grace. Another person of singular quality named Ibn Sawlan, who was born in the year 300 A.H. is also pointed out in this assembly. He had flourished about a century and a half before Hariri. During the caliphates of Al-Mu'izz 'illah and al-Ra'id, <sup>illah</sup> he is living at Baghdad. So far as known about him, he was a man of great eloquence, because his sermons greatly affect the hearers. <sup>216, 217</sup>

The most significant point which this assembly reveals is injustice and mal-administration of public affairs during the Abbasid reign. The Caliphs, Governors and Judges have not paid any heed to maintain confidence in the hearts of the people of their age. They were, no doubt, rolling in luxury and wealth, while the poor were bearing burden of life. The judges (Qadis) did not perform their judicial duties honestly and in good faith. They were rather acting on recommendations, out of greed of bribery and illegal gratification and had other personal advantages. Thus the common people were afraid of the circumstances prevailing at that time in all places of the Islamic

---

214. Qanawi al-Adab p. 120

215. Nayf al-Maqama p. 57

216. Al-Isharati Sharah Maqamat pp. 251, 252

217. Khawariq al-Mawarith p. 156.

more. The growing discontent, dissatisfaction and complaint against him and his rulers, are clearly mentioned by those learned scholars, such as al-Sakhbi, al-Nadwi, al-Muniri, al-Shahrastani, Abu al-Hasan al-Ushari and others.

Hariri, in this assembly, has strongly ridiculed their characteristics and condemned the misdeeds and negligence of such rulers. The oration of a certain man to the hero of Bagdad, shows the condemnation of the cruel rulers to their subjects. The unequalled prose and poetry of this assembly exhibits Hariri's powerful command in Arabic literature and his mastery in producing it in an unique style of composition.

Al-Furat is called after the river Euphrates. The people of Furat are renowned for their command in ecclesiastical correspondence. As cited by al-Harishi, Furat is a man belonging to 'Ajl and he had some sons, who were known for their best style of composition, having abundant skill and knowledge and also holding the rank of vizier. For example, 'Umar b. Furat was Governor; Abdul Hasan Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Furat was the vizier of al-Muqtadir etc. It is said that vizier Abu Hasan b. Furat used to invite nine skilled secretaries every day at dinner. Hariri referring to the people of Furat (Ahl-i-Furat) in this assembly, means to recall their splendour and glory because of their vast knowledge and learning. Short story related in it shows the anxiety of Hariri for meeting the men of letters, who have joined the official -persons in a boat on the Euphrates. These literary figures have shown their gener-

218. Ahmed Amin Duhai Islam 77 191 to 192 vol. 1

219. Abd al-Munim Zuhairi no 97, 115 vol.

220. shanawi al-Arab on 211, 223, 266



osity in allowing him their useful company. Hariri mentions here a generous man of the Umayyad reign named Qa'qa b. Sharr who was a retinue of the caliph Mu'awiyah. The joy of those literary men in granting Harith their association is resembled with the famous generosity of Qa'qa b. Sharr. Hariri has finely depicted the landscapes around the Lubratas. As the boat moves ahead, Hariri sees Abu Zayd in shabby dress whom the above company does not like due to his poor costume. Shortly, they begin to discuss the superiority between secretarial correspondence and mathematics. Some of them are in favour of the former, while others praise the latter. Abu Zayd begins to deliver a rhetorical address in which he accuses <sup>each</sup> of them while also praising them afterwards. It resembles with the 3rd Maqama in which he (Abu Zayd) has praised dinner after he has rebuked it. This assembly shows Hariri's excellent oratory and eloquence by which he defends sometimes one's cause, while another time he takes the opposite side and attacks the former.

In the end Harith discovers Abu Zayd, who is reciting verses on their folly, because they have judged him by <sup>his</sup> ~~their~~ appearance. He praises his poverty under which virtues and other good qualities are hidden. He declares before them that nothing of show is better than reality which is covered. Thus he leaves the boat abruptly without taking any gift from them,

~~showing his self respect, greatness and importance.~~ 221-223

221. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 253 to 264

222. Chenery assemblies p 219

223. Qasawi al-Madab pp 190, 191

This assembly also points out to the literary activities during the lifetime of the author of Maqamat. The unanimous verdict of all historians of the Abbasid age is, that people from the highest rank to the lowest were anxious for literary attainments. Many writers of this age had attached themselves to some court of the caliph, Governor or amir. The rest who did not join them, lived in seclusion and continued their literary pursuits. Baghdad, Rayy, Isfahan, Shiraz, Iraq, Nishapur, Surjan and other places were the chief centres of literature of the age. It was in these circumstances that Maqamat were composed, hence the effect of the prevalent custom of literary attributes were bound to appear in their writings.

Al-She'ria is named after poetry. Hariri has composed this assembly mainly to display his poetic artistry. This is why he has named it after poetry. It is no doubt, one of the wonderful arts of poetry to write such verses which may also be read in different form without any addition. The story itself is of little significance. What is astonishing is the poetical diction of the author. Thus it may be easily concluded that Hariri as a poet and as a prose writer especially as a Maqama writer, is equally remarkable. According to the compiler of al-Maqamat the assembly of Hariri's produces his ability in composing different unique forms of poetry. It proves that purpose of Maqamat is or to show his conscientiousness and genius in producing various

224. Ahmed Amin DuhalIslam p 125 vol I

225. Ahmed Amin Zuhar-al-Islam pp 97, 120 vol. I

226. Ghazawi al-Adab p 120

227. Gibb Arab Literature pp 30, 35

228. Arbuthnot Arabic literature pp 96, 97

229. Kayf al-Maqamat pp 64, 65

literary forms, for which Abu Zayd is merely a tool to display the<sup>230</sup> before the literary pioneers. As the theme of this *Maqama* requires, the place where transference is said to have taken place, is one of the chief centres where the litterateurs of the age were assembled. Baghdad during the Abbasid reign was the chief centre of knowledge and learning. All writers have praised it and have highly admired the talents, who were eminent and had achieved fame through their various contributions. The compiler of 'Arabic Authors'<sup>230</sup> has stated that 'Baghdad is certainly the capital of the world and the mine of every excellence. It is the city whose inhabitants have always been the first to unfurl the banners of knowledge, and to raise the standard of science, indeed their subtlety in all branches of learning, their gentle manners and amiable dispositions, noble bearing, *conspicuous* wit, penetration and talent are deservedly praised.'

In the words of the learned author of 'Arabic Literature' 'the new capital Baghdad became the centre of literature and the arts, 'the market' as an Arab historian puts it, to which the cares of the sciences and arts were brought, where wisdom was sought as a man seeks after his stray camels and where judgment and values were accepted by the whole world.'<sup>231</sup>

Such was the glory of Baghdad where litterateurs were regarded by audiences and rewarded by rulers. The story begins with the arrival of Harith at Baghdad and his seeing Abu Zayd and his son going to the Governor or the criminal judge of that place. Abu Zayd puts on a green silken blanket, called 'Baylean'

---

230. Arbuthnot Arabic Authors pp 96,97

231. Gibb Arabic Literature pp 35,36

and looks like an eloquent man. The said youth is handsome and smart. The former charges the latter with a theft of a copy of his verses. At the command of the Governor, he recites verses which are indeed, unique and charming. The youth denies all charges against him and recites his own verses. His defence is that similarity of poems is due to similarity of thoughts, which have occurred by chance. The said Governor highly appreciates their poems and wishes to reconcile them. At this, Abu Tayd refuses to support his son on account of poverty and the Governor offers the gifts and garments. In the end, it is revealed that Abu Tayd has cheated him (the Governor) and has received gifts from him.<sup>232, 233</sup>

Al-Qatce'ya means 'portion'. In this Assembly, Hariri has produced twelve grammatical riddles together with an elaborate discourse. He has further solved all puzzles, which show his sharp wit and skill. The story described, in this assembly, is nothing but a means to relate the grammatical riddles. The place referred in it is Baghdad, the principal seat of knowledge and arts at that time. Abu Tayd along with some literary persons go to Baghdad and hear recitation of a singer. The controversy arises on the use of 'Raf' and Naab. Abu Tayd settles the dispute by setting twelve enigmes to them in which he discloses hard and technical points of Arabic Grammar. At last, Abu Tayd receives presents in lieu of his solving the said puzzles. The company wishes to offer him some drinks which he refuses saying that he has taken an oath not to drink in the world.<sup>234, 235</sup>

---

232. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp. 265-275

233. Ghazali's Assemblies pp. 234 to 243

234. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp. 150 to 157

235. Hayf al-maqama p. 66.

the reference to the literary activities of the Abbassid period especially at the court of Abbās I, al-Baḥrī and the habit of drinking among the kings, amirs, governors as well as the common people, are nicely <sup>236-239</sup> attested.

Chenery observes that 'the portion of al-Rabi, a large and populous quarter or suburb of Baghdad was known by this name, because the ground had been given by al-Manṣūr to his chamberlain (Ḥajib) Abū Fazl-al-Rabi 'b. Yūsuf.<sup>240</sup>

This assembly is known after a city named Keroj between Isfahan and Hamadhan which is situated on the hillside of Persian Iraq. As remarked by Chenery 'It was rebuilt and greatly enlarged by Abū Sulaf, a celebrated general and a great patron of letters in the time of the Imams al-Mansūr and al-Muḥsin.<sup>241</sup> The reference to this place gives an idea of the glory and luxury of its inhabitants during the lifetime of al-Rabi. The story begins when Abū Sayd is ignored by Harith at Keroj. He (Abū Sayd) looks naked and shivering due to severe cold. Among the crowd he recites verses about his painful life and receives furs and coats from them. Harith also gives him a garment.

The striking phrase used by Abū Sayd to attract the people is worthy to be noticed here. 'The days of winter' as described by Abū Sayd reminds him of a verse of Ibn Sufayn in which he has related seven things. All the names of those things begin with winter season with comfort.<sup>241</sup> His assembly, as cited by the

- 
236. Hitti The Arabs pp 96, 97  
237. Ahmed Amin uhal Islām p 115 vol. 7  
238. Ahmed Amin Suhar-al-Islām pp 97 to 100 vol. 7  
239. Qasawi al-Adab pp 196, 202 to 203  
240. Chenery Assemblies p 243  
241. Chenery Assemblies pp 253 to 257, 254

compiler of al-Maqama produces one of the remarkable norms  
of Hariri.<sup>242</sup>

Al-Maqta means the 'assembly'. Hariri does not name this assembly after the names of cities or towns but he calls it after the artistry which he has displayed in it. According to the compilers of al-Maqama,<sup>243</sup> it is also based on literary norms in his which Abu Zayd has recited his eulogistic discourse on Harith b. Harman, showing alternate letters pointed and unpointed. It is sometimes lengthy whether presented in the form of prose or poetry, which clearly exhibits Hariri's skill and ~~neer~~ in producing such systematic use of letters. It appears that he has a large number of resembling words at his disposal which he uses whenever he likes in his writings.<sup>244</sup>

This is the first Maqama in which Abu Zayd has appeared on the stage in the garb of a wealthy man and has related his sudden prosperity. No reference to Ahwas a city on the Karun river, about fifty miles south-east of Basra, is in the words of Chenery 'noted for its unhealthiness, newcomers being liable to attacks of fever.'<sup>245</sup>

The story begins when Harith resolves to seek his fortune in Ahwas owing to his penury. On his way he finds Abu Zayd in a tent where the latter is taking rest and enjoying his life. He tells Harith about prosperity which he has attained by presenting an eloquent address to some great personality. Harith in the company of Abu Zayd comes to Basra for hearing the account of his success in life. At this place Abu Zayd describes the

---

242. Zayf al-Maqama p. 57

243. Zayf al-Maqama p. 61

244. Umar Farrukh al-Asa'ili p. 57

245. Chenery Assemblies pp. 258, 259

as is burdened with debts and lamenting his misfortunes, then the Governor of Tus's place in Ahurasan, rewards him for his eulogistic composition. At length, Abu Sayd dictates the aforesaid address to Harith and offers him (Harith) some gifts <sup>245</sup>

It is one of the first assemblies in which Abu Sayd has given gifts to Harith in the person of a rich man just as in the days of Hariri, caliphs, Amirs and Governors used to bestow gifts on litterateurs for their brains. A decoit of begging is invisible in it, which is generally found in his Maqamat. The reference in shawz, sus and Tus point the well known places with regard to literary objects and for the purpose of achievement of rewards by the poets and learned men during the Abbasid period. <sup>246-249</sup>

The assembly 'of the cont-scholars' describes the story of a lost camel and its search. <sup>250</sup> It produces the significant art of Hariri in composing his Maqamat, as cited by the compiler of al-Maqama, Hariri in this assembly like his some other assemblies has exhibited his extraordinary talents in producing a unique literary form. It bears its own identity for supreme artistry. The account related by Harith b. Harman and the sharp genius of Abu Sayd showing his impressive style of composition together with his command of lexicon, evidently <sup>251</sup> prove it is Hariri's master-piece assembly.

---

246. Ahmed Amin Duhel-al-Islam p 199 vol. I

247. Ahmed Amin Zuhar-al-Islam pp 115,121 vol. I

248. Ahmed Amin Zuhar-al-Islam p 95 vol. 2

249. Ghazawi al-Adab pp 5,118 pp 120,120

250. Zayf al-Maqama p 64

251. Steingass Assemblies p. 324

Al-Samarqandi is named after Samargand, a famous town at Persia. Hariri, in this assembly, presents an excellent sermon in which all letters are unpointed. According to the compiler of al-Maqama, Hariri by producing such a novel style of writing has displayed his unique and singular command of the Arabic language. Probably he wishes to show his superiority to the well known preacher of Sayf-al-Daula namely, Ibn Nabata, because it is said that the latter's sermons had amused the people and the learned men and reciters (muqarr) used to relate them. But Hariri does not adopt the very style of Ibn Nabata. In truth he enlarges it with the addition of Saji' and Daffi'. Thus he chooses for himself a different form in order to display his mastery of description and has composed this assembly on a particular pattern in which all letters are Unpointed.<sup>252, 253</sup>

This magnificent sermon begins when Abu Hayd stands on the pulpit of a mosque, proclaims instability of human destiny and certainty of death etc. The verses recited by Abu Hayd in the end, show the consequences and the intelligence of its words.<sup>254</sup>

Al-Nastia: - It is also one of the literary assemblages of Hariri which relates an amazing story in a fanciful and ambiguous language along with a marriage rite. Abu Hayd in this assembly delivers a wonderful address in which all letters are unpointed and thus he shows an artistic design which remains unchallenged in the history of Arabic prose literature.<sup>255, 256.</sup>

252. Kayf al-maqama pp 61, 62

253. Umar Farrukh al-Rasa'il p 57

254. Steingass Assemblies p 321

255. Steingass Assemblies p 325

256. Kayf al-maqama pp 62, 63



This assembly is named after a place, 'Masid' which was populated by al-Hajjaj between Hama and Kufa in the year 183 A.H. Hariri has further mentioned one of the greatest mystics of his age, named Ibrahim b. al-Adham and also one of the best kings of Ghassanid empire namely Jabla b. al-Adham.<sup>257</sup>

Al-Sooria. In it Abu 'ayd presents a discourse to the people, who are attending a marriage ceremony near Cairo. In his address he describes the duties of the rich for the poor and discloses the object of matrimonial alliance. In the words of Thomas Chenery<sup>258</sup> "the 30th Maqama (Hariri) is remarkable for the use of what are called Sāsani phrases i.e. the apt of borrow mountebanks, prestigitators and the like. Hariri enters a house by chance hung with rags, which he discovers to be a place of call of such people. A wedding is going on and the beggar bridegroom in gaunt apparel, takes his seat with the dignity of King Munthir Ibn Ma-as-Yara. Then steps forward an old man, who of course turns out to be Abu 'ayd and delivers himself a wedding sermon, with the regular exordium of the mosque... and at the close Abu 'ayd performs the marriage ceremony. The 'target' appears to have been thought not unworthy of study, for one Abu Dulaf wrote a qasida in it, setting forth the habits and ways of life of such people and their singular dialect."<sup>259</sup>

The compiler of al-Maqama<sup>259</sup> has stated that 'Soor' is a town on the frontier of Lebanon. Likewise, al-Sherishi has said that 'Soor' is a town in Syria at a distance of 30 farsakh from Damascus. The description of Baghdad and Egypt convey one's memory to the glory and splendour generally found in all cities and towns of the Abbasid reign.

257. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 58 to 68

258. Chenery Assemblies pp 76, 287

259. 'ayf al-Maqama pp 71 to 79

There are certain words in this assembly which are particularly used by mendicants who call themselves Sasanids. This shows the existence, vocabulary and their other activities of life, being artful in their livelihood by means of cleverness and deception. Hariri like his predecessor, al-Farabi does not only play on words but also produces the most popular class of people of his time, whose activities have been well known and widely spread throughout the Islamic countries under the Abbasid rule. Besides, Abu Zayd declares in his verses that he is an inhabitant of Seruj and refers to the Romans, who have captured Seruj in the age of Hariri. Thus he relates one of the historical battles of his time in which the Romans have achieved victory on his own people. His assembly is full of many amusing points and it relates an adventure which is based upon recreation and entertainment. Hence it stands singular in its character and shows superiority of Hariri amongst his contemporaries.<sup>259, 260</sup>

Al-Ramla, Abu Zayd is known in this assembly delivering a message to the people at Mecca in which<sup>h</sup> relates the duties of true religion in a refined and polished connection. It may also be counted as one of the religious discourses as depicted in some other Maqamat. Al-Sherishi has described that 'Ramla' is a town of Syria which is called after this name by the Arabs. When the caliph Sulaiman b. Abdul Malik renewed its constructions, it became a city of Palestine.<sup>261-263</sup>

260. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 69 to 77

261. Steingass Assemblies n. 225

262. Zayf al-Maqama pp 27, 66, 67

263. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 77 to 86, 87 to 106, 106 to 110.

al-Taybi, in the words of Dr. P. Steingass it 'is one of the most elaborate, important, longest and most difficult of the assemblies'.<sup>264</sup> In it, Abu Zayd appears like a Mufti and answers several questions of legal and canonical importance.

It is named after 'Tayba' which refers to the holy city of Medina. Abu Zayd solves hundred juristic problems and explains the meaning of various unfamiliar words. Each problem is put by a jurist and is answered by Abu Zayd. In all these questions and answers not only juristic but also lexiconic knowledge are preserved. He always plays a trick on his question on a lexicon's basis, because he uses words which are spoken for some well known meaning but he also intends to mean some unfamiliar meaning. Thus he surprises his audience by two meanings of the same word.

Hariri was a follower of Shafi'ite doctrine, hence the name of Ibn Idris i.e. Imam Shafi'ite refers to the faith adopted by him.<sup>263-265</sup>

Al-Tiflesia:- In this assembly, Abu Zayd appears in the guise of a mendicant who is suffering from leprosy. He makes an appeal for alms and obtains it. This assembly is named after Tiflesia a city of Armenia. The distance between Tiflesia and Yuli Gali, one of the important places is about 30 farsakhs. Armenia was conquered by Sulaiman Rabi'a during the caliphate of Othman, the 3rd Caliph of Islam. As stated by the compiler of al-Maqamat, this assembly also belongs to the class of religious discourses. It does, indeed display Hariri's eloquence and chaste speech.<sup>262, 263</sup>

---

264. Qasr Farrukh al-Ham'ili p. 57  
265. Chetvry assemblies p. 358

Al-Zabeddia: This Maqama is called after 'Zabood' a town in Yemen, the distance between Sana'a and Zabood is of 40 far-sakhs. It was next to Sana'a being a fertile and well guarded place of Yemen in the days of Abbasids. Its people were rich and they were rolling in wealth and luxury. Hariri by naming this assembly after Zabood has pointed out one of the luxurious cities of his time, which was famous for its richness, gardens meadows etc.

Hariri also refers to the prevalent practice of 'Ghilman' during the Abbasid rule by his description of the beauty of Ghilman. Al-Sherishi has cited some examples of this practice in his Sharah Maqamat al-Hariri. Some of such examples are as follows: Shafi'a was a slave of al-Mutawakkil, who was well known for his attraction and other noteworthy fortitudes. Huccain b. al-Zuhri too, loved him and wished to have a drink from his hands. Similarly al-Mu'izzuddula had a Turkish slave beside him, who was famous for his beauty. Amir al-Hawwari had fallen in love with a slave named Sadi', who also bewitched the heart of al-Mizir b. al-Zayyat. Abu 'Isa b. al-Rashid was also proud of keeping a handsome youth beside him whose name was Bashir.<sup>266</sup>

The story in this assembly begins when Abu Taysi appears like a slave merchant and Harith purchases his son as a slave for himself. Later the youth repudiates the sale and says that he is Joseph. Shortly they go before a Qazi and the matter herewith is settled.<sup>267</sup>

Al-Shirasia: This Maqama is called after Shiraz, a city in Persia. It was then famous for its prosperity and glory as the Governors and amirs used to visit and stay. Many kinds

---

266. al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat p. 110 to 121  
267. Steingass Assemblies p. 325

of fruits, flowers and vegetables were available in the gardens of Shiraz. The inhabitants of this place drank water of the streams reaching there through canals. This land is famous for producing some celebrated figures of its age, such as Razi, Sa'di etc. Hariri in this assembly, has depicted Shiraz of his own age when it was a place of enjoyment and amusement. The general habit of the people and their fondness of drinking wine is also manifest from this Assembly, when Abu Zayd metaphorically relates a wine cask as a maiden and wishes a wedding robe to be purchased for the same. Thus it is certain that the people of this age were accustomed to liquor and other bad habits e.g. dance, 'Whilman etc. 268, 269

Al-Maltai. It is also named after a place 'Maltia' which is a town in an island of beautiful landscapes. The distance between al-Raqqa and Maltia is about fifty farsakh. Al-Raqqa is a place, known as Mother of Islands, which is described by al-Mas'udi in his work noted by al-Jarishi. It is also said that Maltia is situated on the suburb of Syria. The learned historian al-Ya'qubi has stated that Maltia was a big and ancient city, which was destroyed by the Romans and al-Mansur the well known Abbasid Caliph had built it again in the year 199 A.H. 268, 269

During this period riddles were much popular because of the general interest of the people in them. The litterateurs used to play on words in their essays and thus they pleased their audiences well as tested their minds. Hariri has composed this assembly mainly for the purpose of riddles just as in his two 268. Al-Jarishi Sharah maqamat pp 121 to 129, 129 to 136 269. Steingass assemblies p 325.

other assemblies he has made it his chief object.<sup>270</sup>

Abu 'ayd, in this assembly, has presented a very realistic picture of the habits of his people, such as taking Qahwa, wine etc. This all proves that Hariri has depicted a social picture of his time and his assemblies are based on true facts.<sup>268-270</sup>

Al-Sa'dia. This assembly is called after the name of a big city of Yemen, known as Sa'n'a. The distance between Sa'n'a an important commercial place, and Sa'da is about sixty farsakhs. In the time of Hariri, this place was famous for manufacturing good leather as well as for the beauties of its maidens. By his reference to Sa'da, Hariri mentions one of the commercial centres of his age.

In this assembly, the story runs almost in the same way as any other assemblies. Abu 'ayd in the company of his son goes to the Qari of that place and relates his dispute with his son. The said Qari rebukes his son for breaking his relationship with his father.<sup>271, 272</sup>

Al-Marwa. This assembly is named after 'Marv' a town of Khurasan. There were many villages and palaces in Marv and it was also called 'Jami Khurasan' i.e. Mother of Khurasan which was the seat of caliphate of al-Mamoon.

The address of Abu 'ayd in this assembly, to the Governor of Marv is one of the most eloquent and exquisite

---

270. *Zayf al-Maqamat* v. 65  
271. *Al-Sharshi Sharah Maqamat* on 136 to 145, 146 to 155  
272. *Steingass assemblies* p. 325

pieces of poetic literature in which he has urged to display generosity to literary talents and has raised liberality for them. <sup>271, 272</sup>

**Al-ʿUmmanīya.**—This assembly is called after ʿUmman, a famous city on the shore of an ocean. It relates about a sea voyage and a magic spell against the dangers of the sea. Then a storm comes to the port of an island, its terror makes the travellers frightened and awe-stricken.

The reference to 'Umman' recalls the well known place which is situated on the bank of the ocean along with the description of a reputed market of 'Umman' which was known as 'Bahar' in those days.

Hariri in this assembly states about a noted amir of Iraq who was living in his time and whose name was Sayf-al-Daula b. Maʿūd-al-Aʿlī. It is also said that his name was Baboos b. Saḍqa b. Maʿūd b. al-Fanjashahi has remarked that when the said amir learnt that Hariri has mentioned some of his virtues in his assemblies, he offered him gifts and esteemed his merits. Later, he (the said amir) disobeyed Al-Imam-al-Mustarshad-billah and was defeated by him in a battle in the year 517 A.H. He was killed in 529 or 530 A.H. at the hands of Sultan Maʿūd b. Muḥammad b. Malikshah.

In truth, Hariri in his assemblies depicts the social affairs of his time and relates about its people and its events which also bear a literary significance. Simultaneously he continues with its object of philology and lexiconic explanations throughout his assemblies. Hence the remark of Thomas Uhleny that 'the assemblies of Hariri are themselves the best picture of

---

the society of the city, appears to be just and proper. <sup>273-275</sup>

**Al-tibrisi:** This assembly is called after a place Tibris which is a town of Khuzestan in Azerbaijan. It describes a dispute between Abu Sayd and his wife before the gate of Tibris. Abu Sayd complains his wife's disobedience while the latter murmurs against her husband's abuse of matrimonial rights.

According to the compiler of al-Maqamat this assembly also is one of the literary assemblies of Hariri in which the author has displayed his exquisite literary art as well as his vast knowledge of lexicon.

A perusal of this Maqama gives many historical facts which are referred in it. Thus the marriage of Mucayyana with Sajjah in the early days of Islamic career between Abul Aswad al-Du'ali with his wife before the caliph 'Umayyad; the well known beautiful lady named Shoorin who was the daughter of Abul Aswad al-Du'ali and whose interesting story is popular among Ajamis; the countless wealth of Zubaida, who was reduced to narrow al-Rashid; the marriage of Is'haq with al-Mansur, the famous Abbasid caliph who had extreme love and affection for her and he also offered her a blanket of gold which was of unique design and he had spent a lot on this marriage; the accounts of Kaba and her wealth; the mysticism of Rabi'a; the bride of Khandaf in pre-Islam; the elegiac verses of Janna for her brother; Sakhr, the accounts of Abu Dulama, who achieved fame during caliphate of al-Saffah, al-Mansur and al-Mahdi and his early work; the religious sermons of al-Hasan al-Basri; the vast knowledge and learning of al-Sha'bbi; the grammar and metres in poetry of al-Jahil; the

---

273. Steingass Assemblies p 325, 326

274. Al-Sherishi Gharaib Maqamat pp 151 to 162, 165 to 196

275. Tayf al-Maqama pp 64, 68



erotic and satiric verses of Jarir; the eloquence of al-B. Sa'ida in his excellent speeches; the singular evolutions of Abdi Hamid and his elegant and highly polished style of composition; the recitation and memory of 'Umar b. al-'Ala and al-Azmai's for his narration of the Arabians, all these facts lead to the conclusion that Hariri has cited a good deal of past and present events in his assemblies which exhibit his vast knowledge and there is no doubt that some of the aforesaid events belong to the Abbasid age.<sup>273-276</sup>

Al-Tanisia:- This assembly is named after 'Tanisia' a big and ancient city, where the best cotton and woolen cloths were made. There was also a small part of ocean in which the water of Nile flowed and ships from Syria and other western countries anchored.

Al-Hariri referring to this commercial place of his time relates its importance and its best productions, which were made and supplied from there to various places.

This assembly too belongs to the religious class of the assemblies of Hariri. Abu Kayd delivers in it a sermon which is full of high and lofty ideas containing moral admonitions. The wonders created by a youth like Geruji exhibits a charm in the society in which he displays his wits and <sup>277-279</sup>verities.

Al-Najrania:- It is called after a place known as 'Najran' in the neighbourhood of Yoran. Hariri has described a

276. Chenery assemblies pp 2 to 5

277. Al-Sherishi Sharah 'Aqamat pp 196 to 206

278. Steingass Assemblies p 326

279. Kayf al-Maqama p 57

number of riddles in this Maqamat through Abu Sayd and it is his second Maqama on riddles. The narration of these riddles in some of his Maqamat shows their popularity and interest amongst the people of his age. In the beginning, he has also referred to Banu'Agra, which was a famous Arabian tribe, and A'al-i-Ali-Safra, who were valiant and mighty people. Al-Muhallab is one of the remarkable figures of A'al-i-Safra, whose name appears brightly in many literary and historical books of Arabic literature.<sup>280-282</sup>

Al-Bakria; In this Maqama Hariri has shown his eloquence and command in Arabic language in different ways through Abu Sayd. Abu Sayd and a youth discussed the subject of matrimony which creates an interest amongst the people. A reference to a famous place of Yemen, namely Harment which was a business centre and was a place of various commercial activities especially in shoe making and regarding some other amusing accounts that are related in it, are finally depicted. It is no doubt, one of the most outstanding Maqamat of Hariri, which makes evident his mastery in the Arabic language.<sup>280-282</sup>

Al-Shatwia; This is the third assembly on riddles in which the author has furnished double meaning of the words. In the end, Hariri has himself explained the meaning of these words. It exhibits his vast knowledge of riddles which were popular among them in that period. Indeed, his assemblies are a dictionary of various niceties of the Arabic tongue along with the object of philology and lexicography which are learnt after a perusal of them.<sup>281, 282</sup>

---

280; Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 207 to 234, 235 to 247

281. Nayf al-Maqama p 65

282. Steingass Assemblies p 326.

Al-Ramla. This assembly is called after a village of Syria, known as Ramla. Abu Zayd and his wife were again seen here discussing on conjugal rights and at last, his wife appeared before the Qari of Ramla after a settlement of their dispute. Hariri in it has pointed out one of the leading Qaris of his time. His name was Abu Yousuf, who was the Chief Qari in Baghdad during the caliphate of Al-Mohdi, al-Hadi and Al-Rashid, the Abbasid caliphs. It is further said that Abu Yousuf was the first man, who was named as chief <sup>283, 284</sup> Qari in Islam.

Al-Halbia. This assembly is named after Halb, a big city of Syria. It is one of the ancient cities of the middle East which consists of various rare and historical objects. In the days of the Abbasid rule, some of its markets, places, mosques and schools were well known for their beauties and niceties. Ibn Jubair has praised its great mosque, colleges and hospitals for their <sup>se</sup> several good qualities. Further, in this assembly, Hariri has mentioned a place named 'Hims' a big city in Syria, situated at a distance of hundred miles from Damascus which holds an importance. It was a pride of its inhabitants that they had originated mathematics and were compelled to have an account of their sums, because of their being leading business men. Another writer namely, al-Funjadhi has stated that the people of Hims were known for their follies and innocent acts. Many laughable stories are related for them. However, it cannot be denied that Hims was an important place since long. <sup>283</sup>

---

33. Al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 254 to 267, 267 to 255

14. Steingass Assemblies p. 526

It is undoubtedly, a literary and poetic Assembly of Hariri in which Abu Zayd appears in the guise of a school teacher, while his students exhibit their linguistic subtleties in a wonderful manner. The verses in the beginning are recited peculiarly in which all letters are unpointed but he again introduces his artistic poetry in which all the letters are pointed. Hariri is not contented with the above model of unique verses, hence he further shows his command in the Arabic language and recites such verses in which the letters are pointed and unpointed respectively. In the meantime he uses similar and resembling words in order to display his vast store of learning.<sup>285</sup>

Al-Hajrin:- This Assembly is called after 'Hajr', a village of Yemen which was also a big town overgrown with many palm trees and it was adjacent to Badha. The reference to 'Hunayn' where the battle took place between the tribe of Hamedin and Muslims during the lifetime of the prophet; the well known sword named 'Fansa' of Sayf 'Umar b. Ma'dikar; the high family of Abd Manaf renowned for nobility and hospitality and who was also the grandfather of the prophet of Islam; Abd-al-'Adnan, the people of Yemen who were famous for their honour and gentleness, all these subjects and some other accounts takes one's memory to the past historical facts.<sup>286</sup>

This assembly produces an artificial distance between Abu Zayd and his son, who obtains wealth from the audience. In the end, Hariri has cited certain maxims of the Arabs and has explained their meanings. It is also one of the literary assemblies

---

<sup>285</sup> Zayf al-Maqama pp 63 to 65  
<sup>286</sup> al-Sherishi Gharah Maqamat pp 270 to 278

of *harikah*, as remarked by the compiler of *al-Maqamat*. In this he has shown his linguistic artifices in the same manner as in his other assemblies which are composed on this pattern.<sup>257, 258</sup>

It will be noteworthy to state at this place that *Hariri* has admitted himself to be a follower of his predecessor *al-Hamadani*, in the preface of this assembly. Despite this fact, he has declared himself superior to *al-Hamadani* through *Abu Zayd* who has recited the following verse:-

هـ ان يكن الاسكندر في قبلي فالطل قد سبى دأما الويل  
والفضل للوايل للالطل

288

Moreover, the question of being the originator of *Maqamat* is quite different from being superior to anyone. Thus according to the version of *Hariri* himself, he does not claim to be the inventor of *Maqamat* composition hence no conclusion can be drawn against *al-Hamadani*.<sup>286</sup>

*Al-Haramia*. This assembly is called after the mosque of *Banu Haram* where *Abu Zayd* of *Seruf* gives an excellent speech full of moral and religious values. *Hariri* always keeps *Baara* and the culture of his age before him. Hence he represents their characteristics and conditions prevailing in the Islamic cities of his time. The names of the varieties of wine such as '*Madan*', '*Khinzrus*' and '*Sahba*' and '*Galaf*' clearly indicate the habitual drinking prevalent among the people at that time. Even the particular cup known as '*Danan*' is mentioned in it, which was usually used at the time of drinking.<sup>289</sup>

257. *Steingass assemblies* p 326

288. *Zayf al-Maqamat* pp 56, 64

289. *al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat* pp 270 to 276, 279 to 281

According to the general tradition, this Assembly is the earliest composition of Hariri and other assemblies are nothing but a variation <sup>290</sup> of this theme. It has also a significant historical importance, because it reveals the origin of the assemblies as well as the nature and circumstances that compelled him to compose this Maqama. In the words of Thomas Cheney "the armies of the Crusade had forced their way into Syria, and carried on a remorseless war against the Moslems. Baldwin, brother of Godfrey, took possession of Edessa, which had been surrendered to him by the inhabitants, who were mostly of the Armenian race. According to an eastern chronicler, the following event took place in the year 400 A.H. (1101) A.D. A Turkish chief named Gokman collected, in the neighbouring city of Suruj, a body of Turkmen and prepared to march against the Franks. The latter advanced to meet him, the army of Gokman was put to flight. The Franks advanced against Suruj, laid siege to it and put to the sword the male capable of bearing arms. The women were made slaves, the place was plundered and only those inhabitants escaped who sought safety in flight." <sup>290</sup>

The aforesaid statement refers to the circumstances which have incited Hariri to compose his Maqama al-Haramia. Afterwards the learned commentator has described the place and the speech of Abu Zayd. He says that "sometimes after, Hariri being in the mosque of Banu Haram, in the quarter of Basra where he lived, observed an old man putting on torn and shabby garments and keeping all the marks of poverty upon him. He said the valley <sup>290</sup>. Cheney Assemblies pp 36 to 40, 83

of a foot traveller, and had evidently come from afar. Abul Qasim Abdullah, the son of Hariri who tells this story says 'the company asked him, where he had come from? He answered, 'from Soruj' Asked again about his kinyah or byname and he answered that it was Abu Zayd. The wanderer had excited the company with curiosity with his fluency and eloquence of address, in which he related the destruction of his city, the loss of his daughter and his own exile and beggary.<sup>290</sup>

He further remarks that "there is no reason to doubt the truth of this adventure." De Sacy has also narrated the above account from the eminent commentator al-Hari and there are several other writers who have endorsed this opinion.<sup>290</sup> Briefly, one can easily conclude that Hariri represents the picture of the society of his age through his marvellous assemblage.

According to the compiler of al-Maqamat, Hariri has himself related the cause of composition of his Maqamat, in his 18th Maqama called al-Maramia. The appearance of Abu Zayd in the mosque of Damu Haram and reciting a wasifa in which he had complained his hardships etc, is taken as a solemn fact by the narrators (Riwayat)<sup>291-293</sup>

Al-Qasani:- In this Maqama, Abu Zayd incites Harith his son to adopt the life of a mendicant as it is the most successful and prosperous profession. He also describes about Sasan, who has invented this vocation, has distinguished its kind and has spread it at every corner of the world. According to al-Gherishi, when the Persians were subdued during the caliphate of 'Umar' and 'Ughman' they obeyed to the conquerors, adopted their

291. Steingass Assemblies p 326

292. Zayf al-Maqama pp 49 to 52, 57

293. Umar Farrukh al-Rass'il pp 54, 55

religion and customs and ~~and~~ they were clever persons, they began to earn their livelihood through various means. One of such means was mendicancy. These beggars or mendicants always referred that that they had belonged to the imperial house of Sasan, the prince of beggars and were known as Sasanids. They further related the tyranny of time, their misfortune and thus people began to sympathise with them and called such beggars as Sasanids. In the words of Thomas Chenery <sup>294</sup> "this may be the true derivation of the word, but it is evident from 19th Assembly that Hariri adopts the legend which makes Sasan a real person." <sup>295</sup>

All the assemblies from the first to which are connected on a single pattern. They are thus, of <sup>one</sup> nature and are narrated by Harith b. Harwan. In this 19th Assembly Abu Sayd has appeared for the first time as a narrator of his own incidents and events of life. He has urged his so-called son Harith, to practice mendicancy because it is the most important and successful profession. He highly praises mendicancy and ridicules all other ways of making livelihood. From a perusal of his assemblies, it becomes obvious that this Assembly is the last in which due regard to the practice of mendicancy is paid and after a full appreciation of it, Hariri makes his hero, Abu Sayd to roam about in different cities of Islam till the last day of his life, bidding farewell to his vocation and making a will to his son to adopt it and thus narrates his thorough knowledge and experience in mendicancy. <sup>296, 297</sup>

---

294. Al-Sarish al-Majma' pp 283-294  
295. Chenery Assemblies pp 83, 287, 288  
296. Steingass Assemblies p. 326  
297. Zayf al-Maqama pp 52 to 54.



It is one of the most interesting discourses related in this Maqama and Chenery has rightly observed that it is one of the finest pieces of rhetoric in the world<sup>295</sup>. No doubt, this Assembly has presented one of the most striking and popular class of people of the Abbasid reign, especially in the days of the author of glorious Assemblies. These people who used to deceive the masses and obtain gifts and also through various ways, were called by the name of Sasanids, 'Naboot' etc.<sup>294-297</sup>

Al-Basra;—This Assembly is named after Basra, the home town of Hariri. Abu Dayf has reported in it on his past deeds and praised Basra for its glory and splendour. At last, he had settled down to his devotions and his 'farqall' verses are most interesting and breathe the purest spirit of devotion<sup>298</sup>. Chenery remarks 'but perhaps the first place in regard of merit should be given to the 30th and last Assembly, called *Basra*.' In this composition, he adds 'Hariri exhibits his piety as penitent and reformed. In it is introduced a most eloquent eulogium of the city of Basra; the hymn of Abu Dayf breathes the purest spirit of devotion<sup>298</sup>.' In the time of Hariri, the society of his native city Basra, had a vast scope for talented and learned figures. Although after the foundation of Baghdad as the capital of the Abbasids, it had decayed to some extent yet he says in this Assembly, 'that there remains but a border of it, but it was still a rich and populous, and compared with many other in those troubled times, a secure place.... the grammatical school of Basra was, from early times, the most famous in the Arabic world.'<sup>299</sup>

In fact, he has praised his mother town and expressed himself in these words, 'of your number was he who originated grammar (or syntax)...',<sup>299, 300</sup>

Regarding geographical importance of Basra and the condition of people in Islamic cities, Hariri always keeps Basra, his native city before his eyes and begins to depict the manners and characteristics of the society of his age. Thus it is doubtless to hold that 'The Assemblies of Hariri are themselves, the best picture of the society of the city'.<sup>299</sup> Some Chenery further states the following 'Moreover to lay place the scene of the adventure, it is always Basra that comes in his mind and the dialect of Basra whose taste he shares or reproves. It was yet, from its geographical position, a place of wealth and refinement. The author lands it as the spot where the ship and the camel meet, and sea-fish and lizard, the camel leader and the sailor, the fisher and the tiller, ample provision seems to have been made for literary pursuits. Several libraries had been founded and were open to the public. Into these libraries the learned and the tasteful flocked, to read or to discuss the merits of them or their writer'.<sup>299</sup>

In the opinion of the compiler of al-Maqamat, this Assembly is one of the respectable religious assemblies in which Hariri presents the best moral and religious ideas. Abu Zayd in it, has shown his repentance for his past deeds, has sought mercy of God, has declared his solemn affirmation to Harith b. Hammam then has left the place. Soon it is heard

---

299. Chenery Assemblies no 2 to 10

300. Steingass Assemblies p 326.

that he has gone to his native city Doruj from Rome, has put on the robe of a pious and mystic person, and has become a devotee. Lastly, Harith has found him (Abu Zayd) a perfect religious man who is busy in his prayers. Both of them meet each other and say <sup>301</sup> goodbye. With it the Assemblies come to an end. Indeed, the author has finished his Assemblies in the same enduring manner as he has started them with due interest and charm. He introduces his hero, Abu Zayd to the narrator, Harith in the first Assembly, while in the last both of them depart bidding farewell to each other. It is also said that according to Hariri, the Assemblies come to an end with Maqama al-Sassania, when Abu Zayd makes a will to his son and declares to keep himself aloof from worldly affairs. However, this much is certain that Hariri has produced his all Maqamat (Assemblies) on a particular and perfect model, which becomes a matchless record in the history of Arabic Prose literature.<sup>301, 302</sup>

---

301. Zayf al-Maqama pp 54, 55

302. al-Sherishi Sharah Maqamat pp 294 to 305.

### Bibliography

- Al-Asfahani, Abul Farj, al-Aghani,  
(Dar-al-Kutub-al-Misriya Cairo, 1952  
2nd edition)
- Abdul Hai b. 'Imad-al-Damishqi,  
(Shadaret-al-Dha'shab, Beirut 1889.
- Abdul Qadir b. Umar-al-Baghdadli,  
Khasana-t-al-Adab,  
(Beolaq Press Cairo 1299)
- Abu Youssef, al-Hamashaa (part I)  
(Delhi Printing works 1924)
- 'Abd Rabbihi Ahmed b. Ishaq,  
'Ikd-al-Farid' Vol. 3  
(al-Isnaqamat press Cairo 1953)
- Ahmed Amin Fuhel Islam vol. I Cairo 1952  
" Zuhar-al-Islam vol. 1,2 1952  
" Fajrul Islam Cairo 1955
- Ahmed b. Mustafa, Miftah-al-Sa'ade-va-Misbah-al-Siada vol. I  
(Da'iratul Mu'arif-al-Mizania, Hyd. Deccan)
- Arbutnot F.F. Arabic Authors 1890  
al-Bakari Abul Hasan, Dimyat-al-Qur,  
(al-Ilmi Press Aleppo 1949)
- Al-Bayhaqi Ibrahim b. Ishaq,  
al-Mahalla-al-Madawi  
(al-Sa'ada press Egypt 1906)
- Browne Edward G.A. Literary History of Persia  
vol. 1,2 1951
- Chenery Thomas, The Assemblies of al-Hariri vol. I  
London 1867
- Gibb H.A.R. Arabic Literature  
(Oxford Press London 1926)
- Hitti P.K. The Arabs (London 1927)
- Haji Khalifa Kasf-al-Zunun vol. 2, 1943

- II -

- Al-Hanafi-~~wa~~-Ibn Nagia, al-Maqamat  
(Ahmed Khalil Press Istanbul 1914)
- Al-Busari Abu Isma'q Ibrahim b. Ali, Zahr-al-Andab  
(al-Sa'ada press Egypt 1953)
- The Khalikan Dafayat-al-A'yan vol 1,3 Cairo 1948
- Jahiz Abu Ushman Umar b. Bohr, Kitab-al-Bukhala  
(Khairia press Egypt 1906)
- Jurji Zaijan Tarikh Andab-al-Lughat-al-Arabia  
(al-Holal press Egypt 1930)
- Al-Khatib-al-Baghdadi Tarikh Baghdad  
(Cairo 1369)
- Labid Diwan (Leiden L.J. Brill 1891)
- Al-Has'Uqi Mura'j-al-Ra'hab  
(326 A.H. = 956 A.D.)
- Al-Muffaddah-al-Midbi Mufaddaliyat  
(al-Rahmania press Egypt 1926)
- al-Maqfisi Anis-al-Khawri, al-Ikhsan al-Arabia vol. 2 1952
- Nahmod Ghawwi al-Adab-fi-Tilli-Sami Mura'at (al-  
Amanat press Egypt 1949)
- Maroon 'Abbud Ba'it al-Zaman-al-Hamadani (Darul  
Ma'arif Beirut 1954)
- Mohd. 'Akif Beg & others Kitab-Maliat-al-Lughat-al-Arabia vol I
- Mustafa-al-Gadiq-al-Rafai'ee Tarikh-Adab-al-Arab  
(al-Muktaba-al-Tajawwizat-al-Kubra-press  
Allahabad 1953)
- Mohd. Ahmed Siddiqi Ibn-al-Hariri-~~wa~~-Maqamatuhu, Aserar  
Hariri press Allahabad 1953.
- Mohd. 'Abduhu 'Azam Diwan Abu Tammam with notes by  
al-Tibrizi vol I  
(Dar-al-Ma'arif Egypt 1951)
- Nicholson R.A. A literary history of the Arabs  
(London 1914)
- Al-walqalaandi Abul Abbas Ahmed, Subh-al-A'Cha (vol XIV)  
(Amiria press Cairo 1919)
- Al-Shantarini Abul Hasan Ali b. Bassam, al-Zakhira-fi-Mahasin  
ahl-al-Jazira (Cairo 1942)

- III -

- Al-Sherishi Abul Abbas Ahmed b. Abdul Badi, Ghareh Naamat  
Hariri vol. I
- Al-Sheikh Ahmed al-Astrandari-wa-al-Sheikh Mustafa Enawi  
al-Tasif-fi-al-Adeab-al-Arabi-wa-Tarikhi  
1927
- Al-Sheikh Mohd. 'Abduhu-al-Misri (Beirut 1889) al-  
Maqamat-al-namadhan
- Shawfi Zayf al-Maqams (Dar-al-Ma'arif Cairo 1954)
- Schlagess F. The Assemblies of al-Hariri vol. I  
London 1898  
" vol. 2 London 1898
- Al-Tartushi Abu Bakr Mohd. b. Mohd-al-Talid-al-Fahri  
Siraj-al-Muluk  
(Khairia press Egypt 1306)
- ath Thalibi Yatima vol. 2, 3
- Umar Farrukh al-Rasa'il-tal-Maqamat  
(Beirut 1950)
- Yakut-al-Hamwi Mu'jam-al-Ussba  
(Dar-al-Masue press Egypt 1938)
- Zaki Mubarak al-Nathar-al-Panni  
La Prose Arabe (Cairo 1934)

Encyclopaedia, Journals etc.

- Brockelmann O. Encyclopaedia of Islam vol. 3  
L-A 1936 Leiden N.J. Brill (London)
- " Encyclopaedia of Islam  
(8-1 885, 801, 201 - 3. 111-268)  
P 1.445 - 9. 1.450 etc.
- Charles Rice Supplement to the Arabic catalogue  
of the British manuscripts (in the  
(British museum) London 1894)
- The Encyclopaedia of Islam vol. I  
Fasciculus 10, London 1957

- IV -

- Kitab Iktafa-al-Ummu'-bi-hu-wa-Hatboo',  
(al-Halal press Egypt 1896)
- Fuwal Sayyed Fehris-al-Mukhtutat-al-Musawwara vol. 1  
(Dar-al-Iad Cairo 1954)
- Fehris al-Kutub-al-'Arabia, vol. 3.  
(Dar-al-Kutub-al-Misria Cairo, 1927)
- Al-Faharis-al-'Arabia, (Dar-al-Kutub-al-Misria,  
Cairo, 1938)
- M. Ahmed Tala. al-Kahshaf-un-Mukhtutat Khazain-Kutub-al  
Araf (al-An'ni press Baghdad, 1953)
- Ismail Basha-al-Baghfadi, Isah-al-Maknun-fi-al-Dall-al-Maknun  
al-Munun (Dar al-Adabiyyat al-Kutub wal-Munun vol. 2,  
(al-Sahiya press, 1947)
- Yusuf I'tasani, Fehrist Kitab Khana 'Ajliya Shoori Billi  
vol. 2 (al-Majlis press Tehran 1311)
- Fehris Hamidia Kutub Khana Sind Kafcoz Doloon  
(al-Uthmania press, 1300)
- Fehrist Kutub Khana Rampur (vol. 1)  
'Suluki-Arabi', 1928)
- Somogyi Joseph Islamic Culture vol. 31  
No. 5 July 1957 Syd. Doocan
- " No. 4 October 1957 "